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In the Midst of the Seas

By William Watson

To my Wife

I

LET them not dream that they have known the ocean
Who have but seen him where his locks are spread
'Neath purple cliffs, on curving beaches golden ;
Who have but wandered where his spume is shed
On those dear Isles where thou and I were bred,
Far Britain, and far Ierne ; and who there,
Dallying about his porch, have but beholden
The fringes of his power, and skirts of his commotion,
And culled his voiceful shells, and plucked his ravelled hair.

II

Beloved ! the life of one brief moon hath sped,
No more than one brief moon, since thou and I
To chilly England waved a warm good-bye.
On glooming tides the great ship rode,
The great ship with her great live load.
The famous galleons of old Spain,
The prows that were King Philip's pride,
Had seemed, against her mighty side,
Things of derision and disdain.
Out from Mersey's flashing mouth,
In a night of cloud and dolorous rain,
Darkly, darkly bore she south.

In a morn of rising wind and wave
She rounded the isle of Old Unrest,
And out into open Atlantic drave,
Till all the rage of all the wild south-west
Unmasked its thundering batteries 'gainst her populous breast.

III

Many have sung of the terrors of Storm;
I will make me a song of its beauty, its graces of hue and form;
A song of the loveliness gotten of Power,
Born of Rage in her blackest hour,
When never a wave repeats another,
But each is unlike his own twin brother,
Each is himself from base to crown,
Himself alone as he clambers up,
Himself alone as he crashes down;—
When the whole sky drinks of the sea's mad cup,
And the ship is thrilled to her quivering core,
But amidst her pitching, amidst her rolling,
Amidst the clangour and boom and roar,
Is a Spirit of Beauty all-controlling!
For here in the thick of the blinding weather
The great waves gather themselves together,
Shake out their creases, compose their folds,
As if each one knew that an eye beholds.
And look! there rises a shape of wonder,
A moving menace, a mount of gloom,
But the moment ere he breaks asunder
His forehead flames into sudden bloom,
A burning rapture of nameless green,
That never on earth or in heaven was seen,
Never but where the midmost ocean
Greets and embraces the tempest in primal divine emotion.
And down in a vale of the sea, between
Two roaring hills, is a wide smooth space,
Where the foam that blanches the ocean's face
Is woven in likeness of filmiest lace,
Delicate, intricate, fairy-fine,
Wrought by the master of pure design,
Storm, the matchless artist, and lord of colour and line.

IV

And what of the ship, the great brave vessel,
Buffeted, howled at, patient, dumb,
Built to withstand, and manned to wrestle,
Fashioned to strive and to overcome ?
She slackens her pace, her athlete speed,
Like a bird that checks his ardent pinion ;
She husbands her strength for the day of her need,
But she thrusts right on through her salt dominion
She staggers to port, she reels to starboard,
But weathers the storm and lives it down ;
And one chill morning beholds her harboured
Under the lee of the great chill town.

V

New York ! a city like a chess-board made,
Whereon the multitudinous pawns are swayed
Neither by Knight nor puissant Queen,
And bow not unto Castle or King,
Yet hither and thither are moved as though they obeyed,
Half loath, some power half seen,
Some huge, voracious, hundred-headed thing,
Armed with a million tentacles, whereby
He hooks and holds his victims till they die.
There did we tarry, dearest ! But one day
There came on us a longing to go forth,
No matter whither, so 'twere far away !
Then from the snarl and bite of the sharp North
To Florida's sweet orange-flaming shore,
Through forests and savannahs vast we sped,
And found a sea so fair and strange, we said—
" We have but dreamed of splendour heretofore."
For all the sky-line was an emerald ring
Of such deep glow as baulks imagining ;
And all the tide within it, streak on streak,
Was one extravagant revel and freak
Of amber and amethyst, azure and smouldering red,
With every hue that is the child of these
Dancing at noon on the fantastic seas.

VI

So for a little while ve roamed
In a golden gorgeous land o'erdomed
With throbbing and impassioned skies ;
A palmy land of dusky faces
Meek before the mastering races—
Ebony faces and ivory teeth,
And liquid kindly patient eyes,
With laughter lurking underneath.
Then we took ship and landed here
In old Havana. The old year,
Sinking fast, hath not yet died,
And here we have spent our Christmastide,
And once in a while can just remember
It is not August but December.
And here last night (Canst thou believe
That five days' hence 'twill be New Year's Eve ?)
Here, in this Yule of flaming weather,
Hotter than solstice on English heather,
There broke from out the unfathomed sky
Lightning such as thou and I
Never beheld unsheathed in the fervour of mid July.
All night long, with many an elvish antic,
Violet fire lit up the dazzled land ;
All this morn the weight of all the Atlantic
Fell in thunder on the Cuban strand.
Come—for not yet subsides the mighty roar :
Come—the whole sea invites us to the shore.

VII

Ah, dear one ! can it be
That thou and I have eaten of that herb
Whereof 'tis writ that whosoever tastes
Can ne'er again his lust of wandering curb,
But day and night he hastes, he hastes,
From sea to land, from land to sea,
With vain desires that beckon and perturb
His heart unrestingly ?
Nay, we have roved just far enough to know
That we possess too little wealth to rove,
Being somewhat poor in lucre, though

Exceeding rich in love.
Yet travel hath taught us lessons we scarce had learned in repose;
Our friends have been proven our friends, and our foes have
been proven our foes.
And having seen and pondered much, some visions we surrender,
And return a little weary, for a little taste of ease,
From tempest and from hurricane, and a land of light and
splendour,
And old-time Havana, in the midst of the seas.

VEDADO, HAVANA,
December 1909.

The Old Wife's Song

By Ethel Clifford

Stay you upon the heights, O happy maids,
  Nor heed your lovers till a later hour.
Now is your time of daring and delight,
  Now is your passing time of pride and power.

Stay you upon the heights. The old wise men
  Will give you all their mind, and all their heart
The young men give you, while your spirits range
  The higher hills, from common life apart.

White Artemis will lead you while you dwell
  Remote. The wreathing mists will veil her face,
Your own hearts dim her song, when you step down
  And wear your garlands in the market-place.

At first to you your lovers may disclose
  The hidden wonder-world of Eros crowned,
The scented ways of nightingale-sweet woods,
  The valleys where the wells of Love are found.

But comes the time when in the darkened house
  The lamp of courage fails and flickers low,
And you must meet alone the bitter hour
  Of fear and pain that only women know.

It passes. But henceforward at your breast
  You bear your immortality, the child.
No more for you adventure lest you leave
  The helpless soul alone to face the wild.

You may not stray in the enchanted wood
  Lest some strange spell your heart and footsteps keep
And you forget the torch you have to lift
  To light the way for eyes you waked from sleep.

THE OLD WIFE'S SONG

The tender feet you set upon the way,
  The hands that cling in a dependence sweet
Must stay your soul for joy. You shall not sing
  Your virgin song or see the Huntress fleet.

Yet, ere the end, when that you called to life
  Slips from your folding arms and sleeps anew,
One last sad goddess shall you greet again—
  Beside your hearth Demeter weeps with you.

Overture to "Hail and Farewell!"

By George Moore

In 1894 Edward Martyn and I were living in the Temple, I in a garret in King's Bench Walk, he in a garret in Pump Court. At this time I was very poor and had to work for my living, and all the hours of the day were spent writing some chapter of *Esther Waters* or of *Modern Painting;* and after dinner I often returned to my work. But towards midnight a wish to go out to speak to somebody would come upon me: Edward returned about that time from his club, and I used to go to Pump Court, sure of finding him seated in his high, canonical chair, sheltered by a screen, reading his book, his glass of grog and his long clay pipe in his hand; and we used to talk literature and drama until two or three in the morning.

"I wish I knew enough Irish to write my plays in Irish," he said one night, speaking out of himself suddenly.

"You'd like to write your plays in Irish!" I exclaimed. "I thought nobody did anything in Irish except bring turf from the bog and say prayers."

Edward did not answer, and when I pressed him he said:

"You've always lived in France and England, and don't know Ireland."

"But I do. Don't I remember the boatmen speaking to each other in Irish on Lough Carra? And Father James Browne preaching in Irish in Carnacun? But I've never heard of anybody wanting to write in it . . . and plays, too!"

"Everything is different now; a new literature is springing up."

"In Irish?"

My interest was stirred, and my brain fluttered with ideas regarding the relation of the poem to the language in which it is born.

"A new language to enwomb new thoughts," I cried out to Edward.

On the subject of nationality in art one can talk a long while, and it was past one o'clock when I groped my way down

the rough-timbered staircase, lit by dusty lanterns, and wandered from Pump Court into the cloister, loitering by the wig-maker's shop in the dim corner, so like what London must have been once, some hundreds of years after the Templars. . . . There was their church! And standing before the carven porch I thought what a happy accident it was that Edward Martyn and myself had drifted into the Temple, the last vestige of old London—" combining," as some one has said, " the silence of the cloister with the licence of the brothel "—Edward attracted by the church of the Templars, I by the fleeting mistress, so it pleased me to think.

" That one is making for the southern gate, hoping that the aged porter will pull the string and let her pass out without molesting her with observations."

To bring him forth she had to knock at the door with the handle of her umbrella, and, when the door closed behind her, there seemed to be nothing in the Temple but silence and moonlight: a round moon sailing westward let fall a cold ray along the muddy foreshore and along the river, revealing some barges moored in mid-stream.

" The tide is out," I said, and I wondered at the spots and gleams of light, amid the shrubs in the garden, till I began to wonder at my own wonderment, for, after all, this was not the first time the moon had sailed over Lambeth. Even so the spectacle of the moonlit gardens and the river excited me to the point of making me forget my bed; and, watching the white torch of Jupiter, and the red ember of Mars, I began to think of the soul which Edward Martyn had told me I lost in Paris and in London, and if it were true that whoever casts off tradition is like a tree transplanted into uncongenial soil. Tourguenieff was of that opinion. " Russia can do without any one of us, but none of us can do without Russia "—one of his sentimental homilies grown wearisome from constant repetition, true, perhaps, of Russia, but utterly untrue of Ireland. Far more true would it be to say that an Irishman must fly from Ireland if he would be himself. Englishmen, Scotchmen, Jews do well in Ireland; Irishmen never, even the patriot has to leave Ireland to get a hearing. We must leave Ireland; and I did well to listen in Montmartre. All the same, a remembrance of Edward Martyn's conversation could not be stifled. Had I not myself written, only half-conscious of the truth, that art must be parochial in the beginning to become cosmopolitan in the end? And isn't a great deal of the savour of a poem owing to the language it is written in? If Dante had continued his comedy

in Latin! He wrote two cantos in Latin. Or was it two stanzas?

"So Ireland is awaking at last out of the great sleep of Catholicism!" And I walked about the King's Bench Walk, thinking what a wonderful thing it would be to write a book in a new language—in an old language revived and sharpened to literary usage for the first time. We, men of letters, are always sad when we hear of a subject that we cannot treat. After discussing the Humbert case for some time, Dujardin and a friend fell to talking of what a wonderful subject it would have been for Balzac, and I listened to them in sad silence. "M—— is sad," Dujardin said. "He is always sad when he hears a subject which he may never hope to write."

"The Humbert case being involved in such a mass of French jurisprudence that——" And they laughed at me.

But in the Temple, in Edward's rooms, I had heard that a new literature was springing up in my own parish, and forthwith began to doubt if the liberty my father's death had given me was an unmixed blessing.

"The talent I brought into the world might have produced rarer fruit if it had been cultivated less sedulously. Ballinrobe or the Nouvelle Athènes—which?"

The bitterness of my meditation was relieved, somewhat, on remembering, suddenly, that those who had remained in Ireland had written nothing of any worth, miserable stuff, no novel of any seriousness, only the broad farce of Lever and Lover, and the rudimentary talent of a peasant whose works I had once looked into, and whose name it was impossible to remember. "Very strange, for there is a pathos in Ireland, in its people, in its landscapes and in its ruins."

And that night I roamed in imagination from castle to castle, following them from hillside to hillside, along the edges of the lake, going up a staircase built between the thickness of the walls, and, on to the ramparts, remembering that Castle Carra must have been a great place some four or five hundred years ago. Only the centre of the castle remains; the headland is covered with ruins, overgrown with thorn and hazel; but great men must have gone forth from Castle Carra; and Castle Island and Castle Hag were defended with battle-axe and sword, and these were wielded as tremendously, from island to island, and along the shores of my lake, as ever they were under the walls of Troy. But of what use are such deeds if there be no chroniclers to relate them? Heroes are dependent upon chroniclers, and Ireland never produced any, only a few rather

foolish bards, no one who could rank with Froissart; and I thought of my friend up in Pump Court writing by a window, deep set in a castle wall, a history of his times. That was just the sort of thing he might do, and do very well, for he is painstaking. An heroic tale of robbers issuing from the keep of Castle Carra and returning with cattle and a beautiful woman would be more than he could accomplish. I had heard of Grania for the first time that night, and she might be written about; but not by me, for only what my eye has seen, and my heart has felt, interests me. A book about the turbulent life of Castle Carra would be merely inventions, *cela ne serait que du chicqué;* I should be following in the tracks of other *marchands de camelote*, Scott and Stevenson, and their like. But modern Ireland! What of it as a subject for artistic treatment?

And noiselessly, like a ghost, modern Ireland glided into my thoughts, ruinous as ancient Ireland, more so, for she is clothed not only with the ruins of the thirteenth century, but with the ruins of every succeeding century. In Ireland we have ruins of several centuries standing side by side, from the fifth to the eighteenth; and by the ruins of Castle Carra stand the ruins of a modern house, which the chieftains of Castle Carra built when brigandage declined. The life they lived is evinced by the great stone fox standing in the middle of the courtyard, with two hounds of gigantic stature on either side of the gateway—was evinced, for within the last few years the fox and hounds have become overthrown.

When I was a small child we used to go to Castle Carra for goats' milk, and for picnics in the great banqueting hall overgrown with ivy. . . . "If ever the novel I am dreaming is written, 'Ruin and Weed' shall be its title—ruined castles and a country run to weeds, for there men and women die without realising any of the qualities they come into the world with," and I remembered those I had known long ago, dimly, and in fragments, as one remembers pictures—the colour of a young woman's hair, an old woman's stoop, a man's bulk; and then a group of peasants trooped past me—Mulhair recognised by his stubbly chin, Pat Plunket by his voice, Carabine by his eyes—and these were followed by recollection of an old servant, Appleby, his unstarched collar and the frock-coat too large for him which he wore always, and his covert dislike of the other servants in the house, especially the old housemaids.

All these people have gone to their rest, they are all happily forgotten, no one ever thinking of them but me; and they are clearer to me than they were in life, because the present changes

so quickly that we are not aware of our life at the moment of living it. But the past never changes, it is like a long picture gallery. Many of the pictures are covered with grey cloths, as is usual in picture galleries; but we can uncover any picture we wish to see, and not infrequently a cloth will fall as if by magic, revealing one we thought forgotten; sometimes it is as startlingly sharp in outline, and in colour, as a Van der Meer.

That night in the Temple I met a memory as tender in colour and outline as the Van der Meer in the National Gallery. It was at the end of a long summer's day, five and twenty years ago, that I met her among some ruins in the Dublin mountains, and in her reappearance she seemed so startlingly like Ireland that I felt she formed part of the book I was dreaming, and that nothing of the circumstances in which I found her could be changed or altered. My thoughts fastened on to her, carrying me out of the Temple, back to Ireland, to the time when the ravages of the Land League had recalled me from the Nouvelle Athènes—a magnificent, young Montmartian, with a blonde beard *à la Capoule*, trousers hanging wide over the foot, and a hat so small that my sister had once mistaken it for her riding-hat.

Still in my Montmartian clothes I had come back from the West with a story in my head, which could only be written in some poetical spot, and it seemed to me that I should find inspiration in one of the old houses, among the Dublin mountains, built there in the eighteenth century.

So I set out from Merrion Square in search of one of these one day. The trees in the garden seemed like painted trees when in the grey silence, when the sparrows had ceased to twitter and the carmen spat without speaking, too weary to solicit my fare; when the horses continued to doze on the bridles, when "even the red brick," I said, "seems to weary in the heat. . . . Too hot a day for walking, but I must walk if I'm to sleep to-night."

My way led through Stephen's Green, and the long decay of Dublin that began with the Union engaged my thoughts. I sighed for the old-time mansions, which had been turned into colleges and presbyteries. Lodging-houses had begun to appear in Harcourt Street, and beyond Harcourt Street the town dwindled, first into small shops, then into shabby-genteel villas; at Terenure, I was among cottages, and within sight of purple hills. The Dodder was crossed, and at the end of the village street a great wall began, high as a prison wall. It might have been mistaken for one had it not been for the trees that told me it was a park wall, and I was glad to come upon the great ornamental gateway. It came into sight suddenly—a

great pointed edifice finely designed, and after admiring it I wandered on, crossing an old grey bridge. "The Dodder again," I said. And the beautiful green country unfolded, a little melancholy for lack of light and shade, "for lack," I said, "of a ray to gild the fields. I must see them again when the sun is shining. A beautiful country falling into ruin. The beauty of neglect. There is none in thrift." And my eyes followed the long herds wandering knee-deep in succulent herbage. Every other country I had seen was, more or less, spoilt by human beings, but this country was nearly empty, only an occasional herdsman to remind me of myself in this drift of ruined suburb, with a wistful line of mountains enclosing it, and only one road curving among the hills, and everywhere high walls—parks, in the centre of which stands a stately eighteenth-century mansion. "How the eighteenth century sought privacy," I said, and walked on dreaming of the lives that were lived behind these sequestered domains.

"No road ever wound so beautifully," I cried, "and there are no cottages, only an occasional ruin that seems to make the road more attractive. How much more attractive it is now that it has been redeemed from its humanities—large families flowing over doorways, probably in and out of cesspools." I had seen such cottages in the West. "Ruin alone is beautiful, and weed reclaims all things from ugliness," I added, looking round.

The road ascended among woods; now it curved abruptly; now it twisted up the hillside, among woods ascending on my left and descending on my right; and through the comely trees shooting out of the shelving hill the great plain, in which Dublin lies, showed, divided by hedges, with herds of cattle wandering into the illimitable country.

"All the same, the road ascends very steeply," I growled, beginning to doubt the veracity of the house-agent who had informed me that a house existed in the neighbourhood. "In the neighbourhood," I repeated, for the word appeared singularly inappropriate. "In the solitude," he should have said.

A little higher up in the hills a chance herdsman offered me some goat's milk. But it was like drinking Camembert cheese, and the least epicurean amongst us would prefer his milk and cheese separate. He had no other, and, in answer to my questions regarding a house to let, said there was one a mile up the road: Mount Venus.

"Mount Venus! Who may have given it that name?"

The question brought all his stupidity into his face, and after

a short talk with him about his goats; I said I must be getting on to Mount Venus . . . if it be no more than a mile.

Nothing in Ireland lasts long except the miles, and the last mile to Mount Venus is the longest mile in Ireland; and the road is the steepest. It wound past another ruined cottage, and then a gateway appeared—heavy wrought-iron gates hanging between great stone pillars, the drive ascending through lonely grass-lands with no house in view, for the house lay on the thither side of the hill, a grove of beech-trees reserving it as a surprise for the visitor. A more beautiful grove I have never seen, some two hundred years old, and the house as old as it—a long house built with picturesque chimney-stacks, well placed at each end, a resolute house, emphatic as an oath, with great steps before the door, and each made out of a single stone, a house at which one knocks timidly lest mastiffs should rush out, eager for the strangling.

But no fierce voices answered my knocking, only a vague echo.

"Maybe I'll find somebody in the back premises," and wandering through a gateway I found myself among many ruins of barns and byres, and the ruin of what had once been a haggard; "and those strange places?" I said to myself, "that have passed away"; and not finding any explanation passed on. The great stones had probably been used for the crushing of apples. "Cider-presses?" and I sought a living thing. No cow in the byre, nor pony in the stable, nor dog in the kennel, nor pig in the sty, nor gaunt Irish fowl stalking about the kitchen door—the door which seemed to be the kitchen door. An empty dovecot hung on the wall above it. "Mount Venus without doves," I said, and sought for a pair on the sagging roofs. To my knocking no answer came, and disappointed I wandered back to the front of the house. "At all events the view is open to me," and I descended the hillside, towards the loveliest prospect that ever greeted mortal eyes.

At the end of the great yew hedge, hundreds of years old, the comely outline of Howth floated between sea and sky, spiritual, it seemed, on that grey day, as a poem by Shelley. One thought, too, of certain early pictures by Corot? The line of the shore was certainly drawn as beautifully as if he had drawn it, and the plain about the sea, filled with Dublin city, appeared in the distance a mere murky mass, with here and there a building indicated, faintly, with Corot's beauty of touch. Nearer still the suburbs came trickling into the fields, the very fields through which I had passed, those in which I had seen herds of cattle feeding.

Then came a glimpse of a walled garden at the end of the yew hedge, a little lower down the shelving hillside, and, pulling a thorn-bush out of the gateway, I passed into a little wilderness of vagrant grasses and goats and decaying fruit-trees, and began an examination of the trees, for a scheme of restoration had started up in my mind. Two thousand pounds would have to be spent, but for that money I should live in the most beautiful place in the world. The Temple Church cannot compare with Chartres, nor Mount Venus with Windsor, nor with Goodwood; a trifle, no doubt, in the world of art; but a delicious trifle! One country-house is generally enough for an Irish landlord, and I walked, thinking if there was one among my friends who would restore it sufficiently for the summer months, long enough for me to write my book, and to acquire a permanent memory of a beautiful thing, which the earth was claiming rapidly and which, in a few years, would have passed away.

By standing on some loose stones it was possible to look into the first-floor rooms, and there were marble chimney-pieces set in a long room, up and down which I could walk while arranging my ideas; and when ideas failed me I could wander to the window and suckle my imagination on the view. "This is the house I'm in search of, and there seems to be sufficient furniture for my wants. I'll return to-morrow. . . . But my pleasure will be lost if I've to wait till to-morrow. One more effort must be made." To knock a long while, and to receive no answer, seconded my resolution to see Mount Venus that night. "Somebody must be here," and I went back to the empty yard, and peeped and pried through all the out-houses, discovering at last a pail of newly peeled potatoes. "There must be somebody about," and I waited, peeling the potatoes that remained unpeeled to pass the time.

"I'm afraid I'm wasting your potatoes," I said to the woman who appeared in the doorway—a peasant woman wearing a rough, dark grey petticoat and heavy boots, men's boots (they were almost the first thing I noticed)—just the woman whom I expected would come, the caretaker. She looked surprised when I told her of my knocking, and said she could not understand how it was she had not heard me, for she had been there all the time. She spoke with her head turned aside, showing a thin well-cut face with a pretty forehead and iron-grey hair showing it off, the nose, long and thin with fine nostrils, and the mouth a pretty line I think . . . but that is all I can say about her, for when I try to remember more I seem to lose sight of her. . . . There was a gentleness and a sadness in her voice.

"You've come to see the house?"

She stopped and looked at me.

"Is there any reason why I shouldn't see it?"

"No, there's no reason why you shouldn't; only I thought nobody would ever come to see it again. If you'll wait a minute I'll fetch the key."

"She doesn't speak like a caretaker," and I wondered, now more than ever anxious to go over the house with her.

"Do you wish a lease of the house? Or do you wish only to hire it for the season, sir?"

"Only for the season," I said. "It is to be let furnished."

"There's not much furniture, but sufficient——"

"So long as there are beds and a table to write upon and a few chairs."

"Yes, there's that and more than that," she answered smiling. "This is the kitchen," and she showed me into a vast stone room; and leading from the kitchen the passages were wide and high and built in stone. The walls seemed of great thickness, and coming to the staircase she said: "Mind you don't slip coming up the stairs. They're very slippery, but can easily be put right. The stone-mason will only have to run his chisel over them."

"I'm more interested in the rooms in which I'm to live myself . . . if I take the house."

"These are the drawing-rooms," she said, opening a door, and she spoke about the chimney-piece.

"It's very beautiful, I caught sight of it through the window."

The walls were covered with a number of tall portraits, which I passed, one after the other, without notice, so provincial was the painting, so anonymous, until my attention was attracted suddenly by the portrait of a young girl. The painting was the same provincial, anonymous painting as the other portraits, but the natural gracefulness of the girl transpired in a beautiful attitude. She stood, a sort of Diana of the 'forties leaning on her long bow, draped in classical folds, looking across the greensward, waiting to hear if her arrow had reached the mark. The face was thin and clear-cut, the forehead wide and high, and, about it, great masses of golden hair twisted and curled; the eyes were resolute and the chin firm.

And I wondered what had become of that girl. She must be an old woman now. The recollection of her pointed oval face, her sparkling blue eyes, her high temples, her reddish hair, brought me back to the picture for the third time, and held me at gaze; and forgetful of the woman I had found in the outhouse peeling

potatoes for her dinner. I studied the face, certain that I had seen it before. But where?

"Several generations seem to be here on these wall; and that girl is among the last. A beautiful girl, one of the family no doubt? Tell me, do you know anything about the people who built this house? Or those who lived in it in this century or in the last?"

The woman did not answer, and we wandered into another room, and noticing her face was turned from me I said:

"But won't you tell me something about the girl whose portrait I've been looking at? There's nothing to conceal? No story——"

"There's nothing in her story that any one need be ashamed of. But why do you ask?" And the manner in which she put the question still further excited my curiosity.

"Because it seems to me that I've seen the face before."

"Yes," she answered, "you have. The portrait in the next room is my portrait . . . as I was forty years ago. But I didn't think that any one would see a likeness in it."

"Your portrait!" I answered abruptly. "Yes, I can see the likeness." And I heard her say under her breath that she had been through a great deal of trouble, and her face was again turned from me as we walked into another room.

"But do you wish to take the house, sir? If not——"

"In some ways it would suit me well enough, but it's a long way to bring up food here, and the well is dry."

She told me there was another well, an excellent spring, only the cattle went there to drink; but it would be easy to put an iron fence round it.

"I'll write and let you know. I'm much obliged to you. And your portrait I shall always remember," I added, thinking to please her. But seeing that my remark failed to do so I spoke of the view at the end of the yew hedge.

"Yes, it was once very beautiful, and it is beautiful still," she answered: "so I've heard strangers say. Now, if you'll excuse me, it's my dinner-time."

I let her go and wandered whither she had advised me—to the cromlech, one of the grandest in Ireland. It could not fail to interest me, she had said, and I could not fail to find it if I followed the path round the hill. I would come to some ilex-trees, and at the end of them, in the beech dell, I should find the altar.

And there I found a Druid altar somewhat out of repair. Three stones sharpened roughly and set on end supported

another great stone, but one of the stones had fallen, fallen lately, a passing shepherd told me.

"Even Druid altars do not survive the nineteenth century in Ireland." And I lingered under the ilex-trees, for they were her trees, and all the way back to Dublin I thought of her in that time long ago, in the 'fifties, when an artist came to Mount Venus to paint her portrait. "A man of some talent, too," I said to myself, "for he painted her in a beautiful attitude. Or was it she who gave him the attitude, leaning on her bow? Was it she who settled the folds about her limbs, and decided the turn of her head, the eyes looking across the greensward towards the target? Had she fled with somebody whom she had loved dearly and had been deserted and cast away on that hillside? Does the house belong to her? Or is she the caretaker? Does she live there with a servant? Or alone, cooking her own dinner?" None of these things did I know, and I invented story after story for her, all the way back to Dublin, through the grey evening in which no star appeared, only a red moon rising up through the woods like a fire in the branches.

My single meeting with this woman happened twenty-five years ago, and it is more than likely she is now no longer living, and the ruins among which I found her are probably a quarry whence the peasants go to fetch stones to build their cottages. The beech-trees, I am sure, have been cut down, and sold for eighteenpence apiece by the herdsmen. Mount Venus has passed away, never to be revived again. But of its story enough is known to fill a corner of the book I am dreaming; no more than that, for the book I would write is a man's book, and it should be made of the life that lingered in Mayo till the end of the 'sixties: landlords, their retainers and serfs.

At these words, in the middle of the Temple, a scene rose up before me of a pack of harriers—or shall I say wild dogs?—running into a hare on a bleak hillside, and far away, showing faintly on a pale line of melancholy mountains, a horse rising up in the act of jumping. And on and on came horse and rider, over stone wall after stone wall, till stopped by a wall so high that no horse could jump it, so I thought. The gate of the park was miles away, so the hounds had time, not only to devour the hare they had hunted, but to kill many a rabbit. Surrounding the furze they drove the rabbits this way and that, the whole pack working in concert, as wild dogs might, and the whip, all the while, talking to a group of countrymen, until the hunt began to appear.

"I must be getting to my hounds now," and picking up the

snaffle-rein he drove the pony at the wall, who, to the admiration of the group, rose at it, kicking it with her hind hoofs, landing in style among the hounds quarrelling over bits of skin and bone. Then the wild huntsman blew his horn, and gathering his hounds round him said to me, before putting his horse again at the wall:

"Grand. Half a dozen rabbits make no more than a mouthful apiece between twenty-two couple of hounds. It'll give them an appetite, though that they have always. Bedad if they weren't the most intelligent hounds in the country it's dead long ago they'd be of hunger. Do you know of an old jackass?" he said turning to a countryman. "If you do you might send us up one, a shilling for bringing him. You can have the skin back if you like to come for it."

By this time all the field were up, the master, florid and elderly, and a quarrel began between him and the huntsman, whom he threatened to sack in the morning for not being up with the hounds.

"Wasn't there six foot of a wall between us? And they as hungry as hawks?"

"But if the pony was able to lep the wall, why didn't you ride her at it at once?"

"And so I did, your honour."

And the countrymen were called and gave testimony.

"Well, Pat, you must be up in time to get the next hare from them, for if you don't, it's myself and Johnny Malone that will be drinking our punch on empty bellies, which isn't good for any man."

And away went the master in search of his dinner over the grey plain, under rolling clouds threatening rain, the hounds trying the patches of furze for another hare, and the field—a dozen huntsmen with a lady amongst them—waiting, talking to each other about their horses. I could see Pat pressing his wonderful pony forward, on the alert for stragglers, assuring Bell-Ringer with a terrific crack of his whip that he was not likely to find a hare where he was looking for one and must get into the furze instantly; and then I caught a glimpse of the ragged peasantry following the hunt over the plains of Ballyglass, just as they used to follow it, a fierce wind thrilling in their shaggy chests, and they speaking Irish to each other, calling to the master in English.

"A place must be found," I said to myself, "in my story for that pack of hounds, for its master, for its whip, and for the marvellous pony, and for a race-meeting, whether at Ballinrobe

or Braphy or Castlebar." Castlebar for preference. The horde of peasantry would look well amid the line of hills enclosing the plain: old men in knee-breeches and tall hats, young men in trousers, cattle-dealers in great overcoats reaching to their heels, wearing broad-brimmed hats, everybody with a broad Irish grin on his face, and everybody with his blackthorn. A crowd has gathered to watch a bucking chestnut, a sixteen-hands horse with a small boy in pink upon his back. Now he hunches himself up till he seems like a hillock, his head has disappeared between his legs. Now his hind legs are high in the air, but he doesn't rid himself of his burden. Plunging forward he rises—up, coming down again, his head between his legs; and the boy, still unstirred, recalls the ancient dream of the Centaur.

"Bedad he's the greatest rider in Ireland," a crowd of tinkers and peasants are saying, the tinkers hurrying up to see the sport, retiring hurriedly as the horse plunged in their direction, running great danger of being kicked.

So did I remember the scene as I walked about the Temple that moonlit night, the very words of the tinkers chiming in my head after so many years: "Isn't he a divil?" cries one; "it's in the circus he ought to be." "Mickey was near off that time," cries another, and while the great fight waged between horse and jockey, my father rode up, crying to the crowd to disperse, threatening that if they did not clear the course he would ride in amongst them, and he on a great bay stallion.

"I'll ride in amongst you; you'll get kicked, you'll get kicked."

Even at this distance of time I can feel the very pang of fear which I endured, lest the horse my father was riding should kick some peasant and kill him, for, even in those feudal days, a peasant's life was considered of some value, and the horse my father rode quivered with excitement and impatience.

"Get back! Get back or there'll be no racing to-day. And you, Mickey Ford, if you can't get that horse to the post I'll start without you. Give him his head, put the spurs into him, thrash him!"

And taking my father at his word Mickey raised his whip, and down it came sounding along the quivering hide. The horse bounded higher, but without getting any nearer to unseating his rider, and away they went towards the starting-point, my father crying to the jockeys that they must get into line, telling Mickey that if he didn't walk his horse to the post he would disqualify him, and Mickey swearing that his horse was unmanageable, and my father swearing that the jockey was touching him on the

off-side with his spur. It seemed to me my father was very cruel to the poor boy whose horse wouldn't keep quiet. A moment after they were galloping over the rough fields, bounding over the stone walls, the ragged peasantry rebuilding the walls for the next race, waving their sticks, running from one corner of the field to another, no one thinking at all of the melancholy line of wandering hills enclosing the plain.

A scene to be included in the novel I was dreaming, and, for the moment, my father appeared to me as the principal character; but only for a moment. Something much rougher, more Irish, more uncouth, more Catholic was required. My father was a Catholic, but only of one generation, and to produce the pure Catholic several are necessary, and for the hero of my novel I must seek among the Catholic end of my family.

What I wanted was a combination of sportsman and cattle-dealer, and I sought him among my mother's family, among my Galway cousins. Andy on his grey mare careering after the Blazers, rolling about like a sack in the saddle, but always leading the field, captured my admiration for a while, until it was suddenly diverted by a remembrance of a Curragh meeting, and Dan who had brought up a crack and was going to break the ring.

"Dan, aren't you going to see your horse run?" I cried to him.

"He'll run the same whether I'm looking at him or not."

And Dan, in his long yellow mackintosh, hurrying through the bookies, rose up in my mind, as true and distinct and characteristic of Ireland as the poor woman I had discovered among the Dublin mountains. She had fixed herself on my mind as she was in a single moment. Dan I had seen many times, in all kinds of different circumstances; all the same it is in his mackintosh at the Curragh meeting, on the way to the paddock, that I remember him—in his tall silk hat (every one wore a tall silk hat at the Curragh in the 'seventies) but Dan was only half himself in a hat, for whoever saw him remembers the long white skull over which he trailed a lock of black hair—the long skull which I have inherited from my mother's family—and the long pale face and his hands were like mine, long, delicate, female hands; one of Dan's sisters had the most beautiful hands I ever saw. "He'll run the same whether I'm looking at him or not," and Dan laughed craftily, for craft and innocency were mingled strangely in his face. Dan had a sense of humour. Or did I mistake a certain naturalness for humour? Be that as it may, when I was in Galway I was often tempted to ride over to see him.

"It will be difficult to get him on to paper," I reflected.

"His humour will not transpire if I'm not very careful, for though I may transcribe the very words he uttered, they will mean little on paper unless I get his atmosphere: the empty house at Dunamon, the stables about it filled with race-horses, most of them broken down, for no four legs ever stood more than two years straining over the rough fields which Dan called his race-course. A four-year-old with back sinews and suspensory ligaments sound rarely stood in the Dunamon stables, a chaser or two perchance. All the same Dan did not lose money on the turf; a stroke of luck kept him going for a long time, and these strokes of luck happened every five or six years. Every five or six years he would arrive at the Curragh with a two-year-old, which, on account of its predecessors' failures, would be quoted on the list at ten to one. Dan knew how to back him quietly, his backing was done surreptitiously, without taking any one into his confidence, not even his cousins. It was no use going to Dunamon to ask him questions; the only answer one ever got was:

"There he is, quite well, but whether he can gallop or not, I can't tell you. I've nothing to try him with. There he is, go and look at him."

When the horses were at the post he might advise us to put a fiver on him, if he wasn't in too great a hurry. On these occasions Dan backed his horse to win seven or eight, sometimes ten thousand pounds, and seven or eight thousand pounds would keep the Dunamon establishment going for the next four or five years—a frugal and simple home for horse and man.

As soon as a horse broke down he was turned into a rocky headland, and there the cracks of yesteryear picked up a living as best they could by the lake's edge. He treated his horses as the master of the harriers treated his hounds: intelligent animals who could be counted upon to feed themselves. He loved them too, in his own queer way, for he never made any attempt to sell them, knowing that the only use they could be put to, after he had finished training them, would be to draw cabs; and though food was scarce in Lagaphouca (that is the name of the headland) in winter, they were probably happier there than they would have been in a livery-stable. Only once did Dan sell his horses. My brother, the Colonel, succeeded in buying three from him. "Any three you like," Dan said, "at twenty-five pounds apiece." At that time Lagaphouca was full of wild horses, and the Colonel's story is that he only just escaped being eaten, which is probably an exaggeration. But he chose three,

and his choice was successful. He won many races . . . but I must keep to my own story.

I had wandered round the church of the Templars, and, after admiring the old porch, and the wig-maker's shop, and the cloister, turned into Pump Court. Up there aloft Edward was sleeping. Then leaving Pump Court I found my way through a brick passage to a seat under the plane-trees in Fountain Court, and I sat there waiting for ——, who returned home generally about one. The Temple clock clanged out the half-hour, and I said: "To-night he must be sleeping out," and continued my memories to the tune of water dripping, startled now and then by the carp plunging in the silence, recollecting suddenly that the last time I went to Dunamon, Dan was discovered by me before an immense peat fire burning in an open grate. The chimney-piece had fallen some time ago, one of the marbles had been broken, and it was difficult to replace the slab. No mason in the country could undertake the job, all the skilled workmen had gone out of the country, he said. But one did not discuss the evils of emigration with Dan knowing what his answer would be.

"As long," he would say, "as the people want to go to America they'll go, and when America is out of fashion they'll stay at home. . . . There will always be enough people here for me."

These somewhat trite remarks often brought the conversation to a standstill, and, as I had not been in Dunamon for many years (one generally met Dan in the stables) my eyes went to the piano on which his sisters had played, and to the pictures they had admired. The room was empty, cheerless, dilapidated, but it was clean. Bridget was a clean woman. Of her I shall speak presently when I have called attention to the two pictures of dogs going after birds, reddish dogs with long ears, old-fashioned pictures which I used to detest when I was a child for their foolishness. Now I saw them differently, and wondered at my aversion, which used to keep me out of the room. Under these stood the piano, one made in the beginning of the nineteenth century, prettily inlaid and painted. At it my cousins must have sat learning music. Their music still lay in a heap, unlooked into by Dan, for when he touched a piano it was to play his memories of operas heard long ago in his youth. No doubt he often turned for refreshment to this piano after an excellent dinner cooked by Bridget, who, when she had done washing up, would appear in the drawing-room. Or was she confined to the bedroom and the kitchen? Dan was a human fellow, and would not keep his mistress unduly in the kitchen.

I can see Bridget bringing her knitting with her, and hear Dan playing to her, until overtaken by love or weariness he would cease to strum *Traviata* or *Trovatore* and go to her.

Nobody ever witnessed this scene, but it must have happened just as I tell it.

To disinter my cousin's frailties for the purpose of a book may seem an unkindness to some, but if I did not do this I should not think of Dan at all and what we all dread most is to be forgotten. If I don't write about him I shall not be able to forget the large sums of money I lost by being put on the wrong horses. I am sure he would like to make amends to me for those losses; and the only way he can do this now is by giving me sittings. His brother and sisters will, no doubt, think my portrait in bad taste, the prejudices of our time being that a man's frailties should not be written about. It is difficult to understand why a mistress should be looked upon as a frailty, and writing about the sin more grievous than the sin itself. These are questions which might be debated till morning, and as it is very nearly morning now it will be well to leave their consideration to some later time, and to decide at once that Dan shall become a piece of literature in my hands. It is no part of my morality to urge that nobody's feelings should be regarded if the object be literature. But I would ask why one set of feelings should be placed above another? Why the feelings of my relations should be placed above Dan's? For, if Dan were in a position to express himself now, who would dare to say that he would like his love of Bridget to be forgotten? There is nothing more human, as Pater remarks, than the wish to be remembered for some years after death, and Dan was essentially a human being, and Bridget was a human being. So why should I defraud them of an immortality opened up to them by a chance word spoken by Edward Martyn in his garret in Pump Court? If my cousins complain I'll answer them: "We see things from different sides: you from a catholic, I from a literary." "What a side of life to choose!" I hear them saying, and myself answering: "Dan's love of Bridget was what was best in him, and what was most like him. It is in this preference that Dan is above you, for alone he has sought beauty. Bridget was a pretty girl, and beauty in a woman is all that a man like Dan could be expected to seek. Whoever amongst you has bought an Impressionist picture or a Pre-Raphaelite picture let him cast the first stone. But not one of you ever bought any object because you thought it beautiful, so leave me to tell Dan's story in my own way."

A pretty girl she certainly was, and one that any man would have liked to kiss, one whom I should like to have kissed were I not prevented by a prejudice. We are all victims of prejudice, of one kind or another, and, as the prejudice which prevented me from kissing Bridget inclines towards those which are regarded as virtues, I will tell the reader that the reason I refrained from kissing Dan's mistress was because it has always been the tradition in the West that my family never yielded to such indulgences as peasant mistresses, or the esuriences of hot punch, which nobody but Archbishop McHale was allowed in my father's house. The other priests who dined there at election times had to lap claret. And proud of my family's fortitudes I refrained from Bridget.

"But if you respect your family so much why do you lift the veil on Dan's frailties?"

"We use the same words, but we think differently, and Dan's love of Bridget I hold in higher esteem than Mat's desire, during the last ten years of his life, to buy himself a seat in Heaven, in the front row, a desire, which, by the way, cost him many hundreds a year."

At that moment a leaf floated down, and forgetful of my tale I looked up into the tree, admiring the smooth stem, the beautiful growth, the multitudinous leaves above me and the leaf in my hand. Enough light came through the branches for me to admire the pattern so wonderfully designed, and I said: "How intense life seems here in this minute, yet in a few years my life in the Temple will have passed, will have become as dim as those years of Dan's life in Dunamon. But are these years dim or merely distant?"

A carp splashed in the fountain basin. "How foolish that fish would think me if he could think at all, wasting my time sitting here, thinking of Dan instead of going to bed." But being a human being, and not a carp, and Dan being a side of humanity which appealed to me, I continued to think of him and Bridget—dead days rising up in my mind one after the other.

I had gone to Galway to write *A Mummer's Wife* and Dan had lent me a riding horse, a great black beast with no shoulders, but good enough to ride after a long morning's work, and a rumour having reached me that something had gone wrong with one of his cracks I rode over to Dunamon. The horse was restive and seventeen hands high, so I did not venture to dismount but halloed outside, and receiving no answer rode round to the stables, and inquired for the master of every stableman

and jockey, without getting a satisfactory answer. Every one seemed reticent. The master had gone to Dublin said one: another, slinking away, mentioned he was thinking of going, perhaps he had gone, and seeing they did not wish to answer me, I called to one, slung myself out of the saddle and walked into the kitchen.

"Well, Bridget, how are you to-day?"

"Well, thank you, sir."

"What's this I'm hearing in the stables about the master going to Dublin?"

"Ah, you've been hearing that?" and a smile lit up Bridget's pretty eyes.

"Isn't it true?" Bridget hesitated, and I added: "Is it that he doesn't want to see me?"

"Indeed, sir, he's always glad to see you."

And my curiosity excited I pressed her.

"It's just that he don't want to be showing himself to everybody."

To deceive her my face assumed a grave air.

"No trouble with the tenants, I hope? Nothing of that sort?"

"The people are quiet enough round here."

"Well, Bridget, I've always thought you a pretty girl. Tell me what has happened?" And to lead her further I said: "But you and the master are just as good friends as ever aren't you? Nothing to do with you, Bridget? I'd be sorry——"

"With me, sir? Sure it isn't from me he'd be hiding in the garden."

"Unless, Bridget, he's beginning to grow holy like Mr. Mat, who is a very holy man up in Dublin now, wearing a white beard, never going out except to chapel; far too repentant for the priest, who, it is said, would be glad to get rid of him."

"How is that, sir?"

"He cries out in the middle of Mass that God may spare his soul, interrupting everybody else's prayers. I never liked that sort of thing myself, Bridget, and have never understood how God could be pleased with a man for sending his children and their mother to America. You know of whom I'm talking?" Bridget did not answer for a while, and when I repeated my question she said:

"Of course I do. Of Ellen Ford."

"Yes, that is of whom I'm thinking."

And then looking round to see if anybody was within hearing

she told me how two of Mr. Mat's sons had come back from America bothering Mr. Dan for their father's address.

"Two fine young fellows, the two of them as tall as Mr. Mat himself."

"And to escape from his nephews the master locks himself up in the garden? Well, a good place; excellent security in eighteen feet of a wall."

"But didn't they get into the trees—Mr. Mat's two big sons—and Mr. Dan never suspecting it walked underneath them, and then it was that they gave him the length and breadth of their tongue, and all the stable listening." And the words coming out of her own heart, fearing her plight might be the same, Bridget said: "Wouldn't it be more natural for Mr. Mat to have married Ellen and made a good wife of her than sending her to America and her sons coming back to bother Mr. Dan?"

"It was a cruel thing, Bridget."

"That's always the way," Bridget answered, and she moved a big saucepan from one side of the range to the other. "You'll find him in the garden if you knock three times."

"I'll go and fetch him presently."

"Will you be staying to dinner, sir?"

"That depends on what you're cooking."

"A pair of boiled ducks to-day."

"Boiled ducks!"

"Don't you like them boiled? You won't be saying nothing against my cooking, if you stay to dinner, will you?"

"Not a word against your cooking. Excellent cooking, Bridget."

And she busied herself about the range thinking of the ducks boiling in the saucepan, or thinking of what her fate would be if Dan died before making an honest woman of her. She was no longer the pretty girl I had known years ago, though now she was not more than nine and twenty or thirty at the most; but at thirty a peasant's figure begins to tell the tale of the hard work she has done, and as she bent over the range I noticed that she wore a little more apron-string than she used to wear.

The return of Mat's two sons from America seemed to have made her a little anxious about her own future. "Any day," I said, "another girl may be brought up from the village, and then Bridget will be seen less frequently upstairs. She'll receive ten or twelve pounds a year for cleaning and cooking, and perhaps after a little while drift away like a piece of broken furniture into the out-houses. Such surely will be her fate, unless she becomes my cousin," and the possibility of finding myself

suddenly related to Bridget caused a little pensiveness to come into my walk. Of course it would be impossible to speak to Dan about her. He would not marry her, but she would be provided for, and I went about the Temple thinking of many other stories of Mayo and Galway, how the landlord, after spending his own fortune, found himself obliged to marry his neighbour's daughter for her dowry. The custom of the Galway and Mayo landlords was to emigrate their mistresses. That was the phrase used: "Let him emigrate them"—a callousness which one only finds in devotional people. But Dan was not one of this sort and I am glad to say he never put Bridget away. She lived with him until he died, and then her story becomes legendary. It has been said that Bridget remained at Dunamon and washed and cooked and scrubbed for the next of kin, and wore her life away there as a humble servant at the smallest wage that could be offered to her. And it has been said that she made terms with the next of kin and got a considerable sum from him and went to America and keeps a boarding house in Chicago. And I have heard, too, that she ended her days in the workhouse, a little crumpled ruin, amid other ruins, every one with her own story. Bridget is a type in the west of Ireland, and I have known so many that perhaps I am confusing one story with another. For the purpose of my book any one of these endings would do. The best would, perhaps, be a warm cottage, a pleasant thatch, a garden, hollyhocks and beehives. I can see Bridget an old woman in such a cottage. But the end of a life is not a thing that can be settled at once, walking about in moonlight, for what seems true then may seem fictitious next day. And already Dan and Bridget had begun to seem a little too trite and respectable for my purpose. When he came to be written out Dan would differ little from the characters to be found in Lever and Lover. They would have served him up with the usual sauce, a sort of restaurant gravy which makes everything taste alike. Painted by me Dan would get into something like reality, he would attain a certain dignity, but a rougher being would suit my purpose better, and I fell to thinking of one of Dan's hirelings, Carmody, a poacher, the most notorious in Mayo and Galway, and so wary that he escaped convictions again and again; and when Dan appointed him as gamekeeper there was no further use to think about bringing him for trial, for wasn't Dan on the Bench?

Carmody shot and fished over what land and what rivers he pleased. My friend's grouse, woodcock, snipe, wild duck, teal, widgeon, hares and rabbits went to Dunamon, and during the

composition of *A Mummer's Wife*, when my palate longed for some change from beef and mutton, I had to invite Carmody to shoot with me or dine at Dunamon. He knew where ducks went by in the evening, and Carmody never fired without bringing down his bird: a real poaching shot and a genial companion, full of stories of the country. It is regrettable that I did not put them into my pocket-book at the time for if I had I should be able now to write a book original in every line.

The old woodranger looked at me askance when I brought Carmody from Dunamon to shoot over my friend's lands. "The worst man that ever saw daylight," he would say. I pressed him to tell me of Carmody's misdeeds, and he told me many . . . but at this distance of time it is difficult to recall the tales I heard of Carmody's life among the mountains, trapping rabbits, and setting springes for woodcocks, going down to the village at night, battering in doors, saying he must have a sheaf of straw to lie on.

We used to row out to the islands and lie waiting for the ducks until they came in from the marshes; and those cold hours Carmody would while away with stories of the wrongs that had been done him, and the hardships he had endured before he found a protector in Dan. The account he gave of himself differed a good deal from the one which I heard from the woodranger, and looking into his pale eyes I often wondered if it were true that he used to entice boys into the woods, and when he had led them far enough turn upon them savagely, beating them, leaving them for dead. "Why should he commit such devilry?" I often asked myself without discovering any reason, except that finding the world against him he thought he might as well have a blow at the world when he got the chance.

"Many a poor girl was sorry she ever met with him," the woodranger would say, and I used to ask him if he were such a wild man, how was it that girls would follow him into the woods? "Them tramps always have a following": and he told me a story he had heard from a boy in the village. A knocking at the door had waked the boy, and he lay quaking, listening to his young sister talking to Carmody, who was telling her she must come with him.

"Norah was afraid, it being that late, but Carmody caught a hold of her and dragged her out through the door, so the boy told me, and he heard them going down the road, Carmody crying: 'Begob I've seen that much of you that you'll be no use to anybody else.'"

"And what became of the girl? Did he marry her?"

"Sorra marry; he sold her to a tinker, it is said . . . the one who used to play the pipes."

"I thought you said he was a tinker."

"So he was; but he used to play the pipes in the dancing-houses on a Sunday night, till one night Father O'Farrell got out of his bed and walked across the bog and pushed open the door without a 'by your leave' or 'with your leave,' and making straight for the old tinker in the corner snatched the pipes from him and threw them on the floor, and began dancing upon them himself, and them squeaking all the time, and he saying every time he jumped on them: 'Ah, the devil is in them still. Do you hear him roarin'?'"

I closed my eyes a little and licked my lips as I walked, thinking of the pleasure it would be to tell this story . . . and to tell it in its place. The priest would have to be a friend of the family that lived in the Big House; he would perhaps come up to teach the children Latin, or they might go to him. Dan and his lass were typical of Catholic Ireland, tainted through and through with peasantry. True that every family begins with the peasant, it rises, when it rises, through its own genius. The cross is the worst stock of all, the pure decadent . . . "he must come into the book. Never was there such a subject," I said "as the one I am dreaming. Dan, Bridget, Carmody and his friends the tinkers—with these it should be possible to write something that would be read as long as——"

And while thinking of a simile wherewith to express the durability of the book I remembered that Ireland had not been seen by me for many years, and to put the smack of immortality upon it, it would be necessary to live in Ireland, in a cabin in the west; only in that way could I learn the people, become intimate with them again. The present is an English-speaking generation, or very nearly, so Edward told me; mine was an Irish-speaking. The workmen that came up from the village to the Big House spoke it always, and the boatmen on the lake whispered it over their oars to my annoyance, until at last the temptation came along to learn it; and the memory of that day floated up like a wraith from the lake: the two boatmen and myself, they anxious to teach me the language—a decisive day for Ireland, for if I had learned the language from the boatmen (it would have been easy to do so then) a book might have been written about Carmody and the tinker that would have set all Europe talking; before the year was out a translation would have appeared. The novel dreamed

that night in the Temple by me, written in a new language, or in a language revived, would have been a great literary event, the Irish language would now be a flourishing concern.

That day on Lough Carra its fate was decided, unless indeed genius awakens in one of the islanders off the coast where Edward tells me only Irish is spoken. If such a one were to write a book about his island he would rank above all living writers, and he would be known for evermore as the Irish Dante. But the possibility of genius, completely equipped, arising in the Arran Islands seemed a little remote. To quote that very trite, mutton-chop-whiskered gentleman, Matthew Arnold, not only the man is required, but the moment.

The novel dreamed that night in the Temple could not be written by an Arran islander, so it will never be written, for, alas! the impulse in me to redeem Ireland from obscurity was not strong enough to propel me from London to Holyhead, and then into a steamboat, and across Ireland to Galway whence I should take a hooker whose destination was some fishing harbour in the Atlantic. No, it was not strong enough, and nothing more depressing than the conviction that one is not a hero. And feeling that I was not the predestined hero whom Cathleen ni Houlihan had been waiting for through the centuries I fell to sighing, not for Cathleen ni Houlihan's sake, but my own, till my senses stiffening a little with sleep, thoughts began to repeat themselves.

Other men are sad because their wives and mistresses are ill, or because they die, or because there has been a fall in Consols, because their names have not appeared in the list of newly created peers, barons, and knights; but the man of letters—my energy for that evening was exhausted, and I was too weary to try to remember what Dujardin had said on the subject.

A chill came into the air, corresponding exactly with the chill that had fallen upon my spirit, the silence grew more intense and grey, and all the buildings stood stark and ominous.

"Out of such stuff as Ireland dreams are made. . . . For ten years I haven't thought of Ireland, and to-night in an hour's space I have dreamed Ireland from end to end. When shall I think of her again? In another ten years, that will be time enough to think of her again." And on these words I climbed the long stone stairs leading to my garret.

Once More

By John Galsworthy

AWAKENED by the tiny kicks of her baby, she straightened his limbs on her breast, and lay staring up at the dirty ceiling. The first light of the March morning, through a window which had but a ragged piece of muslin over the lower half, spread its pale glimmer in the little room. It was, like all the little back rooms of that street, deserted by Hope; neither was there anything in it of beauty nor of value except the remains of her stock of violets in the round, brown wicker basket.

Soothed by the warmth of her chest and arms the baby was sleeping again, with his down-covered tiny head snuggled into the hollow of her neck; and, just above that head, the mother's face was like that of a little sphynx.

Two days before, her husband had left her, saying that he was not coming back, but this had not dismayed her, for with the strange wisdom of those who begin to suffer young, she had long ago measured her chances with, and without, him. She made more than he did in their profession of flower-selling, because sometimes a "toff" gave her a fancy price, touched perhaps by the sight of her tired, pretty face, and young figure bent sideways by the weight of her baby. Yes, he took more money off her than she did off him; besides, he had left her twice before in the same way, and twice come back. The feeling in her heart was due to another discovery. Last evening, going home dead-tired, she had seen him on an omnibus with his arm round a woman's waist. At that sight a flame had leaped up in her; burdened with baby and basket, she had run after the 'bus; but it went too fast for her, she was soon left behind. And long, huddled over her fire, she had sat, seeing him with that other woman. And when the fire went out, getting into bed, had lain sleepless, still seeing, and hearing, and shivering with the cold. So, that was where he went! Was she going to put up with it any more? Thus, she lay brooding, avoiding all extravagance, matter-of-fact, sphynx-like, even in thought.

The room grew light; she rose, went to the little cracked

mirror, and looked at her face. If she had ever known that she was pretty, the life she led with her boy-husband, sometimes ill-treated, always scantily clothed, and more or less in want, had bereft her of this knowledge. The woman, round whose waist she had seen his arm, looked well fed, and had feathers in her hat. And in that mirror she tried desperately to find something which might weigh against those full cheeks and those feathers. But she seemed to herself all eyes, there was no colour in her cheeks; she seemed sad to herself. Turning from that glass of little comfort, she lit the fire, and taking up her baby, sat down to feed it. With her bare feet to the flame, and feeling the movement of the baby's lips against hers, she had the first sensation of warmth since the omnibus had passed her. To her, striving so hard, but so unconsciously, for any thought that would assuage her jealousy, there came a recollection that was almost pleasant. Last evening a "toff," entering his garden gate, had bought from her a single bunch of violets for half a crown. Why had he smiled, and given her that half-crown? And at this speculation, the sensation of warmth grew, and with it began to be mingled a feeling of excitement. He would not have looked at her so long, would not have smiled—unless he had thought her pretty! But suddenly the baby's lips ceased to move; the feeling of excitement died. Wrapping the tiny creature in her shawl, she laid him on the bed; then, heating some water, began to wash with unwonted care. She had a passionate desire to make herself finer than that woman with feathers in her hat. No "toff" would have smiled at *her*, even though she had not had to pawn her clothes. Her little brain, frozen with brooding, flaming with jealousy, ran riot amongst clothes. There, hanging on two nails driven into the wall, was all her wardrobe, a ragged skirt, torn jersey, and black straw hat. She put on her one undergarment, and went up to them. Looking at those dim clothes, she was vaguely conscious of the irony in things. Three weeks ago she had "put away" her best suit for four shillings and sixpence to renew her husband's stock of flowers, which rain had ruined. She had pawned her attractions to give him the chance thus to desert her! From the secret place where she kept her wealth, from those many pawn-tickets, she selected one, and put it between her teeth; then, from a broken cup, where, under a ragged cloth, she stored her money, she took the "toff's" half-crown, and five pennies, all she had—and the week's rent owing. She looked round the room; her blankets were in pawn—there was nothing left except her shawl. It was a thick shawl, good for eighteenpence. With

interest threepence, she would still need fourpence to redeem her suit. She went to her flower-basket and lifted the piece of dirty sacking. The bunches were withered. In her rage and disturbance overnight she had forgotten to damp them. She sat down on her bed, and for a full quarter of an hour stayed there unmoving, more like a little sphynx than ever, with her short, ivory-coloured face, black eyes, straight brows, and closed red lips. Suddenly she got up; took off her undergarment, and examined it. There were no holes. Wrapping it tightly in her shawl, she put on skirt and jersey, pinned her hat to her black hair, took pawn-ticket and her money, and went down the dirty stairs, out into the cold.

She made her way to the small shop which was the centre of her universe. No one was there, for the door had only just been opened; and she waited, stolid, amongst those innumerable goods, each one of which had been brought there wrapped in the stuff of human life. The proprietor caught sight of her presently through the glass of the inner door. He was a dark, strong man, and his quick eye, which had in it a sort of cringing hardness, instantly marked her shawl.

"I've had that before, I think, eighteenpence, ain't it?"

From its recesses he took the undergarment. He looked at this critically; it was very plain, thick, and had no frills, but it was strangely new. "Sixpence on that; 'alfpenny off for the washing." Then, as if something in the nature of this transaction had moved him, he added: "Let you off the washing." She silently held out to him her small rough hand, with her money, and the pawn-ticket. He scrutinised both, and said: "I see; that'll be tuppence I owe you on the deal."

With the twopence and her suit, she journeyed home. She put on the suit over her skirt and jersey, for the sake of the warmth, and because that woman had full cheeks; stood for some minutes smoothing her hair and rubbing her cheeks, goose-fleshed with the cold; then, leaving her baby with the woman on the ground floor, she went out towards the road where the omnibus had passed. Her heart was dry with longing to meet that woman; to be avenged on her, and *him*. All the morning she walked up and down. Now and again a youth stopped her, and tried to enter into conversation; but he soon desisted, as if something in her face had withered his good intentions. With the twopence she bought a sausage-roll, ate it, went home, fed her baby, and again came out. It was now afternoon, but she still wandered up and down, always driven on by that longing; and every now and then smiling up at some man. What she

thought to gain by these smiles cannot be told, for no one could have answered them, so mirthless were they; and yet they gave her a queer dead pleasure, as if she felt that they ministered to her vengeance. A strong wind drove the clouds over a clear blue sky, and in this wind the buds and few crocuses in the gardens were trembling. In some of the squares, too, pigeons were cooing; and all the people seemed hurrying with happiness. But for that young wife for ever walking and loitering down the long road where the omnibus had passed, Spring travelled the air in vain.

At five o'clock, moved by yet another obscure impulse of her longing for revenge, she branched off her beat, to the white house which she had seen the "toff" enter last evening. She hesitated long before ringing the bell, and then very stolidly asked to see "the gentleman," in a voice a little thick and hoarse from the many colds she caught selling her flowers. While the maid went to see if this were possible, she waited in the hall. There was a mirror there; but she did not look at herself, standing quite still with her eyes fixed on the ground.

She was shown into a room, lighter, warmer, more strange than any room she had ever been in; giving her a feeling as though a plateful of Christmas pudding, soft, dark, and rich, had been placed before her. The walls were white and the woodwork white, and there were brown velvet curtains, and gold frames round the pictures.

She went in smiling, as at the men in the street. But the smile faded from her lips at once. On a sofa was a lady in a white dress; and she wished to turn and go away, for she felt suddenly that they must know she had no undergarment beneath her new suit. The gentleman asked her to sit down. She sat down, therefore; and in answer to questions, told them that her stock was spoiled, that she owed a week's rent, that her husband had left her and the baby! While speaking, she felt that this was not what she had come to say. They seemed, too, to ask the questions over and over again, as if they did not understand her. And she told them suddenly about her husband and that woman. The lady made soft sounds, as if she understood and was sorry. And moved by that unexpected sympathy, she recounted how she had seen them pass her on the omnibus. Her hosts were silent; then at last the gentleman said he was afraid he did not know what could be done for her: did she wish to leave her husband? She answered quickly: "I couldn't stay with him now, of course." And the lady murmured: "No, no; of course not." What then—the gentleman said—did she

propose to do? She remained dumb, staring at the carpet. It seemed to her suddenly that they were thinking: "She's come for money." The gentleman took out a sovereign, and said: "Will that be any good to you?" She made a little bob, and took the sovereign, clutching it very tight. It seemed to her that they wanted her to go away. She got up, therefore, and went to the door. The gentleman went with her; and as he opened the front door he smiled. She did not smile back. She saw now that he had only meant to be kind to her; and outside the gate she lingered, as though she had lost part of her revenge.

She went home, still clutching the unchanged sovereign; so weak and faint that she could hardly feed her baby. She made up her fire and sat down beside it. It was past six, and nearly dark. Twice before, he had come back on the third day, about this time. If he were to come back now!

She crouched nearer to the fire. It grew quite dark. She looked at her baby; he was asleep, with his tiny fists crumpled against his cheeks. She made up the fire, and went back to her beat along the road where the omnibus had passed.

Two or three men stopped her, but she no longer smiled at them, and they soon sheered off. It was very clear, very cold; but she did not feel the cold. Her eyes were fastened on those great vans of warmth, the motor-omnibuses. Long before each had borne its burden close, her eyes had begun searching. Long after they had rumbled by, her gaze followed them from under the brim of her black straw hat. But that for which she was looking never appeared. And then amidst of the roar and the sudden hushes, the stir and confusion of lamplight and shadow, the stir and confusion and blackness in her own heart, she thought of her baby, and hurried away. He was still sleeping, the fire still alight. Without undressing, she crept into bed, exhausted. If she was like a little sphynx awake, she was more so than ever under the mystery of sleep, with her black lashes resting on her cheeks, and her lips just parted. In her dreams she moved her hands, and moaned. She woke at midnight.

By the light of the still live fire she saw her husband moving past the foot of the bed. He neither spoke nor looked at her, but sat down before the fire and began to take off his boots. The sight of that domestic act roused her to fury. So he could come in when he liked—after going where he had gone, after being what he had been, the ——, the ——! But no sound came; she could form no word fierce enough to call him by. After three days—after what she had seen—after all her waiting

—and walking—and suffering—taking off his boots! Stealthily she raised herself in bed, the better to watch that act. If she had opened her mouth it would have been to utter a scream; no lesser cry could have relieved her heart. And still he neither spoke nor looked at her. She saw him slide down off the wooden chair, as if he would creep right into the fire. And she thought: "Let him burn!" But still all words clung to her tongue, and would not come forth. She could just see his figure hunched now all in a heap, she could hear his teeth chattering, and the sound gave her pleasure. Then he was quite silent, and she, too, held her breath. Was he asleep? The thought of this sleep, while she lay there consumed with rage, was too much for her. She uttered a little furious sound. He did not look up, but his foot moved, a loosened cinder fell; and there was again silence. She began creeping to the foot of the bed. Crouching there, with loins curved, and her face bent down between her stretched-out arms, she was close above his huddled figure; so close that with her hands she could have seized and twisted back his head. In fancy she was already doing this, putting her eyes close to his, setting her teeth in his forehead—so vividly that she had the taste of blood in her mouth. Suddenly she recoiled, burying her face between her arms, on the ragged bed coverlet. For some minutes she stayed thus, crouched like a wild cat on a branch. There was a dreadful sore feeling within her. She was thinking of the first night they had come home to that room; she was remembering his kisses. Something clicked in her throat. She no longer wished to tear and bite, and she raised her face. He had not stirred. She could just see the outline of his cheek and chin; beardless, of a boy, utterly still, as if dead. She felt cold and afraid. What was this silence? She could not even hear him breathe. She slid down on the floor. His eyes were open, very colourless, staring at the dying fire; his cheeks were hollow; his lips seemed to have no blood in them. But they moved, shivering desperately. So, he was not dead! Only frozen and starved as he had been when he came back to her those two other times. The mask of her face let nothing be seen of her thoughts and feelings, but her teeth bit into her lower lip. This was how he had come back to her once more!

The last of the fuel in the grate suddenly flickered into flame. He turned his head towards her. By the light of that feeble fire his eyes seemed like the eyes of her baby; they seemed to ask her for something; they seemed helpless; all his shuddering form seemed helpless. He muttered something; but his shivering

choked the words, so that all that came to her was a sound such as her baby made. And at that sound something in her heart gave way; she pulled his head down on her breast, and with all her strength clutched him to her. And as the fire died, she still held him there, rocking him, and sobbing, and once more trying to give him of the warmth of her little body.

The Fourth Magus

By R. B. Cunninghame Graham

Some ancient writer or another—the Arabs frequently begin a tale, "Says somebody"—relates the story of his life and miracles. Balthasar, Gaspar, and Mechior were, as he tells us, kings in Babylon. How Babylon came to be supplied with such a superfluity of kings he does not say, even if he knew why. Still it was so, for all of them had crowns; rich mantles trimmed with ermine; fine Arab horses with legs as slim as a gazelle's; tails floating in the air; heads like a peacock's; eyes that shot fire, and with a general air as of a hippogriff. In fact these kings had myrrh and frankincense, jewels, furs, scimitars, and vessels of richest plate, and everything befitting to their state.

All this I know, for I have seen it all in pictures, and have rejoiced to learn their horses were of a pale green or else of a rich cinnamon, colours quite natural in royal steeds, and blending well into the pale blue landscape of the Umbrian School of painters, who alone had the true vision of these kings. The circumstance that one of them was black was not the least bit disconcerting to the painters (no colour-line exists in art), but on the contrary it helped them in their work, by furnishing a contrast to the pale yellow faces of the other two. As they sat in their palaces, following the usual avocations of their kind, either being occupied in administering injustice or else in watching dancing-girls gyrate, strange news was brought into the town.

Shepherds, all seated on the ground, watching their sheep folded inside a net of ropes, their dogs beside them and their thoughts fixed on the heavens—as often happens with people of their kind, which in itself accounts why they so often lose their sheep—had seen a wondrous star.

Lustrous and bright as Sirius, redder than Aldebáran, and far more luminous than Zuben-el-Chamali or Altair, it lighted all the sky. Around it was a space as if the other stars had all agreed they were not worthy even to feel its radiance fall upon them, and it appeared to beckon, as the shepherds thought, and

move a little towards the West, as if inviting them to follow in its wake.

Night after night the star appeared in the same place, just up above their heads. At last, seeing, as shepherds will, something miraculous in the affair, they left their flocks—for, after all, what is a sheep or two beside so bright a star—and sought out a Wise Man. After consideration and due examination of the case, he solved the mystery, telling them that a mighty prophet would be born, who would raise up the lowly, redress injustices, cast down the powerful, make rough places smooth, and be the champion of the weak the whole world over; and all they had to do was but to follow in the way the star directed them, and it would take them to the place.

Such things not being for the kind of men they were, they went to Babylon, and, walking up and down about the streets, began to tell what they had seen and heard to every one they met. Little by little the fame of what they said filled all men's minds, and in bazaars and markets, in fondaks, stores, and caravanserais, the wondrous rumour grew.

Lastly, as happens in such cases, now as in Babylon, it passed the palace gates. The kings were fired with it at once, either being filled with faith and hatred of injustice, things natural to men of their estate, or else impelled by that desire of movement which in kings plays the part imagination plays in poets and sets their blood astir.

So taking horse, and followed by a fitting retinue carrying the presents which the painters of the Umbrian School have seen so well, and have depicted for us in the middle distance of their canvasses, they set out on their quest. All the world knows the story of their ride, and how, following the star over the plains, through the defiles of mountains and across rivers, at last it stopped above the stable in which the ox and ass were feeding, making a nimbus with their warm clover-scented breath round the child's head as it lay sleeping in the crib. Their reward was instant, for they beheld their faith made patent by their work, a thing that few attain, however firmly they believe, and whilst men read the simple story of their brief passage through the scene of history, they still will love them, as long as faith and stars continue and shepherds watch their sheep upon the plains. They saw the birth of God made man, and, after having seen it and adored, became immortal; but the fourth Magus, he who lingered on the road, saw man made God, and is forgotten and unknown to any one, except to those who, like some diving negro, seek their pearls in the unnavigated creeks of ancient chroniclers.

That Nicanor hangs out of fashion on his rusty nail, and Gaspar, Balthasar, and Mechior still are household words is perhaps natural, for they by faith were justified, and faith is the true royal road to fame. King Nicanor followed the path along which man from the beginning of the world has worn out countless million pairs of shoes, blistered infinities of feet, and quite as naturally has been forgotten by his kind.

This, then, is how this thing fell out.

When the three kings had ridden off upon their quest, King Nicanor was left behind, owing to his horse having cast a shoe. When the Chaldean smith had shod the horse, after considerable delay—for then as now, in blacksmiths' shops, nothing was ready, and not a single shoe in the whole place would fit—Balthasar, Mechior, and Gaspar had vanished on the plain, and it was almost night. Determining to make at least a start, for being a Wise Man and from the East, where people know the benefit of camping even a league outside the city walls upon the first day of a journey, Nicanor got on his horse and sallied forth, passing the horseshoe arch of the great gate in the town wall towards the West, about an hour before the sun had set.

The camp was pitched just by the side of a wide crossing of a river edged by palm-trees and broken into several channels by beds of sand and stones. Right at the crossing the feet of camels and of mules, passing for centuries, had made a well-defined deep track, in which the riders' feet were almost on the ground as they rode through to reach the stream, their horses stumbling occasionally as they struck their feet against the sides. Young date-palms springing from the sand struggled against the nibbling of the camels and the mules that snatched a mouthful as they passed. A haze of orange fading into pink outlined the palms upon the farther bank, showing each knot upon their trunks. In the light air, the leaves just stirred and made a creaking sound, unlike the whispering of the oaks and beeches of the North. White bones, and here and there a skull, showed where a baggage animal had been released from toil, and round them the sparse grass grew just a little greener, and myriads of the minutest flies crawled in and out between the vertebræ of the dry backbone that would never more bend underneath a pack.

Sitting upon his horse, with one leg crossed upon its neck, the long reins dangling almost to the ground, as it hung down its head a little to snatch a mouthful of the grass, the Magus gave directions to his men to pitch his tents.

Quickly the packs were lifted off the mules' and camels' backs, and the tents rose as if by magic from the sandy grass,

flecked here and there with tiny jonquils: a sky of flowery stars spread or reflected on the ground.

The evening call to prayer, which Mahomet must have perpetuated, for it could not have sprung into his brain unaided, being in itself a necessary action after the daily battle with the sun, rang out, and for a moment all the camp was prostrate, thanking some god or other for the evening breeze.

Slowly King Nicanor got off his horse and a black slave tied it up to the rope of camel's hair which, stretched between two stakes, was set before his tent. Its lofty saddle stood up like an island profiled against the deep blue clouds, for nothing broke the horizon, to the South, but the tents, and the feeding animals. As Nicanor sat on a saddle-cloth before his tent thinking upon the wondrous star of which the shepherds had brought tidings, and inwardly determining to push on at the first light of day, to catch up his companions, three or four figures came out of the palm grove, and, dragging themselves slowly across the sand and grass, stood in a row before him and pointed upwards to the sky with a mute gesture of despair. Famine had wasted them almost beyond the semblance of mankind. Their sunken stomachs and protruding ribs made them look something like a fossil fish embedded in the coal-measures, whilst their thin arms and legs hardly sustained their feet and hands, which looked enormous in comparison to their shrunk, wasted limbs. Save for a wisp of dirty cotton rags about their loins they were as naked as a skeleton, and their parched tongues were rough and horny, like a parrot's, within their parchment-looking mouths.

The Magus gazed at them fascinated, and in a moment the wondrous star and the new prophet to be born into the world were both forgotten in the horror of the scene. As he stood petrified, from every side, from hollows scooped out of the sand, from tufts of thorny shrubs, thin tottering figures rose and staggered to his tent. Women held children by the hand, and miserable boys supported aged men, whilst an old crone crawled on her hands and knees close to his feet, and then, raising herself a little, pointed a skinny finger to the sky. None of them spoke, but the mute glance of their beseeching eyes struck horror to his soul. When he could speak he called for bread, and with his men cut it in slices, then moistening it in water passed it along the line. It vanished as by magic, but still the line grew longer, and in the moonlight the famine-stricken people looked like a troop of wolves that had surrounded some belated traveller on the plain. Some of the people snatched the barley from the horses and the mules as they stood feeding, whilst others struggled

for the crumbs, fighting like starving dogs. King Nicanor called to his men and sent back two of them to bring a mule laden with bread from town, as the throng seemed to grow as if the people sprang up from the sand. The mule-load disappeared almost as quickly as if it had been thrown into the sea. Night waned and the first flush of dawn still found the Magus and his camp besieged with famine-stricken folk. Several days passed and then the starvelings, having eaten, vanished as speedily as they had come, leaving no trace of their appearance except upon the Wise Man's soul. Then, after resting for a day, he once more set out on his way. The sun was rising as he struck his camp, and as he started once again towards the West his thoughts reverted to the birth of the great prophet, the wondrous star, and to his friends, whom he supposed would now be almost at their journey's end.

He caught himself at times almost regretting the delay the starving folk had brought about, and then again thought that if the prophet to be born had come to heal the sorrows of the world, to clothe the naked, heal the sick, and feed the hungry, that at least he had tried humbly to do likewise, though not himself inspired; and that there still was left good work to do on earth during the childhood of the great one, whose birth he hoped to see.

So he rode on, finding upon his path here a blind man and there some wayfarer sitting dejectedly beside his dying horse. Each case delayed him, and when he reached a town his fame had gone before him, and halt and sick, those who had had their eyes burned out for theft, and others who had lost a hand or foot, lopped off to show that justice was as deaf to pity as she is blind to facts, swarmed round him and implored his alms.

Sometimes when passing a lone duar on the plains, just at the saint's house, with its tuft of feathery palms, some wretch would sally forth and, rushing to his side, clutch fast his stirrup, exclaiming, "I take refuge with you," and he would stop and look into his case.

Still, though he knew the prophet must by this time be a youth and growing to a man, when he escaped from the accumulating cares his pilgrimage had brought upon him, he pressed on towards the West. Across the heated plains at times he toiled, mocked by the mirage, and with the heat reflected from some stony tract burning his face, and sometimes through some mountain pass where the frost froze his stirrups to his boots, he kept upon his way, just as men labour towards a goal they know it is

impossible to reach, unconscious that they carry it within themselves from the first day on which they had set out.

Years passed, and not an animal which he had brought from Babylon remained alive, some having died upon the road, and others of old age, in the long halts he made in cities where some injustice or another had detained him on his way. Still, as he lingered, endeavouring to do good, news reached him now and then about the doings of the prophet whose birth he once had hoped to see, and when he got the news a sort of fever would come over him, making him long to see him ere he died.

The flight of time had not left Nicanor unaltered, and from the sleek and prosperous king who had left Babylon so many years ago, young, careless and with hope springing in his heart, he had become a weather-beaten man, grizzled and careworn, and in his eyes had come that look of watchfulness that comes to those who pass their lives upon the road.

The horse he rode, a darkish bay of the Keheilan breed, he had received from an old Bedouin chief near Baalbec, whose son he nursed when stricken with the plague. No other horse throughout Irak could be compared with it, either for shape or blood. His full round eyes, and ears lean as a lynx's, with his round flinty feet, broad forehead, silky mane, and tail he carried like a flag, with the sunk channel running down his spine, which, as the Arabs say, could carry off the dew, showed him an archetype of the breed which alone amongst all the horses of the world is truly noble and fit for kings to ride. Years had fallen lightly on King Nicanor himself, leaving him upright, though they had flecked his hair with grey upon the temples, and given him that gravity which many Orientals seem to acquire in middle life as it were by an effort of the mind. Most of his followers had returned home or died, except a man or two who, by long converse with their master, had imbibed some of his ideas, or else found life upon the road too pleasant to desert and dwell again in the dull round of cities, seeing the sun rise from behind the self-same mountain range and sink into the plain, at evening, leaving no sign to mark its passage through the sky, just as a stone sinks out of sight into a pond.

Now and again strange rumours reached the wandering Mage of what was going on in the far country he had left home to visit, and how the prophet who had come, had gathered to himself a rout of fishermen, of outcasts, publicans, and women, who, it appeared, all followed him about, striving to found no kingdom, but listening to his words in desert places and on the tops of hills. Much did he ponder on the tidings, thinking at first the

prophet must be mad, and then, as he thought more upon the case, seeing a half-resemblance to his own way of life, that is, of course, with that due difference of their respective standings in the world taken into account.

At last, for even in the East all things draw to an end, he found himself close to Jerusalem. Halting upon a hill which overlooked the town, he pitched his camp near to a well, close to which grew a grove of olive-trees. As he sat, after so many years, gazing down on the city where he had heard the prophet lived whose wondrous birth, heralded by the bright star, had induced him in his early manhood to set forth from Babylon, he looked back on his life. The city lay, bathed in the golden haze that in the East hides mouldering palaces and tottering weed-grown walls into whose chinks dart lizards in their play, blots out the dirt and squalor and gilds the broken potsherds on the great dunghills by the gates, setting all floating in a sea of glory, above whose waters float the feathery palms.

After the custom, which in his case was now well sanctified by time, the camp of the Wise Man—for now at last, being in Jerusalem, he was a Wise Man of the East—was overrun by beggars, halt and blind. From them he learned that on the morrow the Romans, who had become the masters of the place since he set out upon his travels from the East, were going to execute two thieves and one who, as they said, was to be put to death for having called himself a king.

After the beggars had been supplied with bread, a wandering fakir came to the camp, and sitting down before the tent entered into one of those long conversations which, in the East, supply the place of newspapers, filling exactly the same use even to the extent of tinging all the news with the narrator's sympathies, just as a newspaper is but the mirror of the mind of those who write in it.

Long did the dervish talk about the state of Palestine, the price of bread and barley, the raids the tribes had made on one another's herds, and lastly, of the execution which was going to be held.

The thieves he touched on lightly, saying they both were sons of mothers who had never yet said No. He thought the name of one of them was Dimas, the other Gestas, but was not sure of their identity. Of the third sufferer, the one who had been called a king, he had more details, and remarked, by the sun's life, he is a man.

Little by little he unfolded all he knew about the man who was to pay the penalty of being called a king. It seemed

that prodigies had happened at his birth. A star had heralded it, and three Wise Men had come out of the East . . . wisdom is in the East, the stranger said, with the air of one who enunciates a fact that none can controvert. King Nicanor, who all the time had listened patiently, broke in upon the tale, exclaiming: "These Wise Men, I know them well, their names are Gaspar, Mechior, and Balthasar. They are my kinsmen; are they still in the town?"

The dervish looked at him as people look upon a man who, without rhyme or reason, suddenly has a lapse of memory, and answered: "In the town! . . . Why, they were here, as I heard tell, some three and thirty years ago, and only stayed a night."

Drawing his hand across his eyes the Magus muttered: "Three and thirty years ago—it seems but yesterday when I set out. This prophet then of whom you speak, who dies to-morrow, is the wondrous babe of whom the shepherds told of yesterday—that is, three and thirty years ago; but he was to redress men's wrongs, lift up the down-trodden, to heal the halt, make the blind see, fight the oppressor, and be a shield unto the weak. Can it be then that in Jerusalem they execute a man for striving for such ends?"

If the fakir had thought the speaker mad at first, he now looked on him as a lunatic.

"Where have you lived," he said, "and do not know that such a man, since the beginning of the world, can have but such a fate?"

King Nicanor, after a pause, said: "I have lived, as I now see, upon the road, never remaining very long in any place, but I remember that now and then it has amazed me, that when I fed the hungry, as you say this man who is to die has done, that many hated me, saying I did it but for love of praise."

Hours camè and hours passed as they sat talking, and by degrees King Nicanor heard all the prophet's life, his love of liberty, his truth, his justice, charity, and how the people loved him, especially the lowly and the meek, and of the special charm he had for women, the sweetness of his nature, and how no one who ever heard him, but fell beneath his spell.

At last, as dawn began to creep into the sky with a pale milky whiteness that gradually extended through the deep blue eastern night, just as a drop or two of mastic tinges the water in a glass, King Nicanor rose to his feet and said: "It is now time to rest. Fate has deprived me of the joy of being present at the birth of him the star announced; I can at least be present at his

death . . . and birth and death are not so very different after all."

Fate, though, that mocks our resolutions, making us but the creatures of itself, had almost made him miss the chance, for in the morning he found his camp besieged with a great horde of beggars and of folk who had heard that one who, some said, was a fool and others a Wise Man, but who in any case gave bread away to all who asked for it, had come into the town.

All day he sat and gave his alms and listened to their plaints, until the seventh hour or the eighth, and then, mounting his horse, rode up to Golgotha. Darkness was spread upon the land as he toiled up the rocky path, making his way with difficulty through the press.

Right at the top, in the half-light he saw three figures set on high. Two of them hung inert; the third just stirred and asked for drink, and Nicanor observed that his long hair hung down upon one side and half obscured his face.

Just at that moment a young man came running with a sponge of vinegar upon a reed, and, holding it up to the middle figure, pushed it into his mouth. He drank, and after a long, shiver had run through his body, he gave a cry so wild and terrible that the dark bay Kehlani that the king rode, reared up and snorted, pawing the air with his fore feet, and as he struck the ground, King Nicanor saw that the middle figure hung limp upon the cross.

The Censorship of Books

By Edmund Gosse

If any proof were needed of the fact that books have now taken their place among the essential requirements of life, it would be found in the excitement which is caused by any attempt made, or suggested, to disturb the balance of literary supply. Reading is not, and never can become, one of our primary necessities, like bread; but it is rapidly ranging itself among the secondary ones, by the side of meat or tea. That is to say, the moment a human being is relieved from the uttermost pressure of need, he surrounds himself with the most obvious comforts, and what issues from the Press is unquestionably becoming recognised as one of those. Therefore we need not wonder that the liberty of the Press, with its necessary limitations, should be the subject of vivid general interest, that it should be watched with jealousy, and that every proposal to tamper with its delicate practical equilibrium should be subjected to keen examination.

We have seen this winter an instance at once of the difficulty of defining the boundaries of literary independence and of interfering with the liberty of reading. It was remarkable enough to deserve to be taken out of the range of men's desultory discussion, and examined in a more philosophical spirit. In spite of the overwhelming vehemence of the electoral crisis, blowing aside most of our habitual minor interests, the dispute between the Circulating Libraries and the public, which began at an early stage of the winter, has continued to reverberate in the newspapers. Between the announcements of "coalition gains" the wail of the boycotted lady novelist has been heard, and in the smallest possible type the *Times* has printed an indignant rejoinder from Three Hundred Thousand Mothers. The interest of the public has been no academic one, and it has been expressed with a considerable violence in one direction and in the other. Let us briefly recount the grounds of the dispute.

On December 1 last, there sprang into existence a body which distinguished itself in the first hour of its career by a startling act. The Circulating Libraries Association was the

result of a meeting between the managers of the principal purveyors of books, drawn together, it would appear from the published statement of the body, to contrive a method of putting a stop to a state of things "which for some time past had been causing annoyance to their subscribers and inconvenience to themselves." It is impossible in England to induce people of this class to state in clear terms what they mean when moral ideas are at stake, and nothing, therefore, could be more opaque than the cotton-wool of verbiage in which the Associated Librarians wrapped up the subject of "annoyance" and "inconvenience" which forced them to take strong measures. They admitted, however, that they, the Librarians, had lately circulated among their clients one (or many) books "which are regarded as transgressing the dictates of good taste in subject or treatment." Their subscribers, or some of them, had complained of this, and the Librarians in their turn bewailed their powerlessness to prevent the abuse. They met on December 1, and associated themselves for the express purpose of circumventing it. They met—and they hit upon what they thought was a perfect plan, which would unite the suffrages of every class in the community. But ah! for the schemes of mice and men!

The plan had its ingenuity and its courage. It was drastic, and yet it was insinuating. The Circulating Librarians, confident in their associated powers, did not hesitate to take the bull by the horns. In their announcement to the public, through the publishers, they adopted a firm tone. "We have determined," they wrote, "in future that we will not place in circulation any book which, by reason of the personally scandalous, libellous, immoral, or otherwise disagreeable nature of its contents, is in our opinion likely to prove offensive to any considerable section of our subscribers." That the Librarians were wholly within their rights in forming this determination, and in acting upon it, is so obvious that, if some indignant authors had not traversed it, it would be needless to point out that, of course, as tradesmen supplying subscribers with a particular kind of goods, the libraries were perfectly justified in saying that such and such a commodity was what they did not require and would not purvey. Their next step showed less judgment and forethought, and landed them in a difficulty.

They proceeded to explain that in order to prevent works of an offensive kind from reaching their subscribers, they had hit upon a contrivance which, it appeared to them, must automatically close the door upon all scandal. Readers had indignantly complained that there seemed to be no one at the

libraries able or willing to divide the literary black sheep from the rest of the flock. Very well! The Associated Librarians would accept the responsibility, and protect the virtue of the public at the cost of great personal inconvenience to themselves. The mode in which they proposed to protect the public was this. They required the publishers in future to submit to a committee of the association a copy of every book, at least one clear week before the date of publication. This committee was to read all the proposed books and to divide them into three categories, "satisfactory," "doubtful," and "objectionable," while the entire body of Circulating Librarians took a solemn pledge that they would refuse to "circulate or sell any book considered objectionable by any three members of the association." These three members were to be unnamed; they would form a secret court, beyond criticism or challenge. There was to be no appeal against their

> mysterious meetings,
> And unknown dooms, and sudden executions.

But worse lay behind. The Associated Librarians not merely demanded that every book should be submitted to them before publication, and announced that it would be refused if the terrible tribunal of three considered it "doubtful or objectionable," but they pledged themselves to proceed altogether beyond their province and make the distribution of such a book under any circumstances "as small as possible." If, therefore, those unnamed and unseen members of a commercial committee objected to a book, the existence of that book was to be threatened, even though it contained nothing contrary to the laws of England. It was to be attacked even outside the jurisdiction of the libraries. If possible, it was to be suppressed altogether. The Librarians must have been singularly naive, for they seem to have thought that a humble public would sip gratefully from this chalice on its knees.

In all discussion of the attitude of the public towards art there is a tendency to overlook the wishes of the artist. When English men of business consider what should be done with an object, the last thing they think of is the opinion of the man who made it. I am far from saying that this curious national trait does not protect us against the inroads of a sterile æstheticism, but it has its disadvantages. Sometimes the man who painted the picture or carved the statue or even wrote the book has something to say which is not merely worth hearing, but must be listened to. The Circulating Libraries, in their "stand-and-deliver" to the publishers, showed the customary national pecu-

liarity. They thought of the wishes of everybody except of the authors. This error could not be repeated by the publishers, who are brought into personal relations with those who write, and they very naturally replied that they could not bow their heads to the Tribunal of Three without asking the authors what they thought about it; and the authors, of course, stiffened their backs at once.

After the unanimous refusal of the authors to allow their books to be submitted before publication to a secret committee which should decide, without appeal, as to whether they could or could not be allowed to appear, the original proposal of the Circulating Libraries was heard of no more. But the correspondence on the suppression of improper books went on as vigorously as ever, and the interest of the public in the subject showed no sign of exhaustion. It is proper that even those whose instincts are most warmly called forth by a desire to guard the liberty of the mind should admit that there has been, and still is, a great deal of anxiety about the ease with which unwholesome literature is disseminated at the present moment. Much, however, is vaguely stated and loosely conjectured. To hear some persons talk of the degeneracy of printed matter we might imagine that the resources of civilisation were exhausted, and the end of decency at hand. Let us inquire what grain of fact is to be sifted out of this mass of exaggeration.

There was published last year a volume of Recollections by an elderly lady of title, which seemed to have been put out, like a tub to catch a whale, for the purpose of scandalising the middle classes. The venerable authoress, who must be a person of a sprightly temper, went, it is said, to the very verge of libel in her zeal for making the flesh of respectability creep. "Their Aunt Jemima, indeed!" she seemed to say. "Come a little nearer, and I will tell you all about their Aunt Jemima—oh, shocking!" As she said this, the hordes of those who dwell wearily in Balham and in Brompton crept on tip-toe nearer and nearer, while the waggish old lady, forgetting to drop her voice, shouted at them through the trumpet of the Circulating Libraries. This incident, though naturally regrettable, is neither unprecedented nor important. The remarkable noblewoman aimed at something like the reputation made in Paris eighty years ago by the egregious Vicomtesse de Chamilly. It is not unfair, since she has got them both, to say that she wanted notoriety and money. Except to the feelings of the descendants of Aunt Jemima, no sort of harm has been done by her "Memoirs." No doubt it may be said that the reading of vulgar books tends to lower the moral tone

of a youthful mind. Very superfine musicians contend that it impairs the character to listen to Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. There are, no doubt, degrees in mental delicacy, but surely no one can seriously come forward with a proposal to institute a censorship of books because one old lady circulates her more or less apocryphal Recollections.

The other case which is brought forward by those who recommend a check on the output of printed matter is more serious. There have been issued of late—so it appears, at least, for I write on hearsay—a certain number of novels, chiefly from one source, dealing with sexual questions of a kind which may be proper for grave medical discussion, but is wholly unfitted for the licence of imaginative treatment. It is bitterly complained that the heads of households find these books in the hands of their children, and that they are "powerless" to check their circulation. In parenthesis, it may be suggested that a parent has the power either to take away the novel from her daughter, or to close her subscription to the library, or to write a protest against the particular book she objects to. In the course of this controversy, it seems to be taken for granted that the subscriber is "powerless"—the word is frequently used—and must sit, tied to her chair, while "doubtful and objectionable" works are read aloud to her by an emissary from the Circulating Library. In the presence of an "objectionable book" there is surely one sovereign remedy always before the subscriber, namely, not to read it.

That the discovery of an immoral and insinuating book in a carefully conducted household is a very vexatious thing is, however, not to be denied.

But before we yield ourselves unreservedly to indignation in this matter there are certain points to be considered which are easily overlooked. In the first place, a really immoral or indecent publication can be dealt with at once by the police under Lord Campbell's Act. This draws a strong line between the possible and the impossible. But the moment we attempt, from a zeal for morals, to improve on the law, to draw another line inside the police line, we embark upon a sea of difficulties. For instance, in the case of the novels which have just been referred to, it is presumable (by one who has never read and never will read one of them) that they keep very amply on the safe side of the Act, or else they would never be circulated at all. If, by accident, a novel of positive scandal passes unobserved into general sale, the first reader who notices its character should communicate with the Home Office.

While it is possible, and, more than possible, inevitable, that people, especially those responsible for the propriety of home life, should feel alarm at the inroads of indelicate and vulgar literature, it is extremely desirable not to forget the broader and, if we may say so, the historic aspects of the question. These are too commonly ignored by moralists who advocate sudden and drastic remedies of an evil which will, perhaps, be found to frighten more than it injures them. There was once a bishop, the wisest and wittiest of his order, who said in his haste—or was said to have said—that he would "rather see England free than England sober." Let us take our courage in both hands and admit that we would rather see English literature free than English literature decent. Dr. Magee did not indicate, in his famous *dictum*, any approval of insobriety. He did not stand behind others of his cloth in his anxiety to see England sober, but he had the breadth of vision to perceive that all good things, and sobriety included among them, depend on the habit of liberty. Make a man a slave, whether to a despot, or to a grandmotherly system of civic repressions, and you take away the fibre of resistance from his character. You make him, in the instances in which his code of bye-laws does not support him, the victim of his own weakness. If no one were allowed to go out of his depth while bathing, no one would ever learn to swim.

When, therefore, we resist with indignation the proposal to censor our reading, and to suppress such books as seem to a committee to be objectionable, it is not with the slightest wish to encourage what is ugly and vile. If there were no laws which dealt with the subject, we should be obliged to use any weapons which society could contrive in order to fight against disloyalty, obscenity, and libellous rancour. We see before us, at this moment, a condition of things in India which calls for a modification of the rights of some of our fellow-subjects in this direction. But our rulers accept this exceptional state of public manners with reluctance, and they meet it by the exercise of the law. What is suggested by some people at home, with regard to English books, is a private legislation inside the legislation of the State. It is a machination of private police, and that is a thing that has never, in all the course of modern history, been of advantage even to superficial morals. A brief examination of the historical aspect of the matter may here be of value to us.

We must first remind ourselves, then, that the idea of a censorship of books was a Papal invention, and has been carried out most firmly and consistently, not by any temporal authority, but by the Church of Rome. In the beginning of the fourth

century, the Council of Carthage issued a decree forbidding Christians to circulate or to possess the writings of the authors of pagan antiquity. It would be difficult to exaggerate the loss which this act of fanaticism has entailed upon the modern world, and the spirit which inspired it is one which must always be regarded with suspicion. In times when books circulated only in manuscript, and within very limited areas, the actual destruction of a work of genius was not only possible, it was often easy. After the invention of printing, the work became more difficult, and was prosecuted with a fiercer zeal. The opening years of the sixteenth century are prominent in the annals of repression, but it took a different course. The Renaissance had done its work, and Roman prelates expended their enthusiasm and their money in the preservation of ancient literature, even though its tendency might be unfavourable to morals and religion. A new enemy was in the field, the reform inside the Church, and this was now pursued in all its literary emanations.

The earliest list of censored books is said to be that drawn up under clerical advice, by Charles V. in Belgium in 1524. The theological faculty of the University of Louvain made itself dreaded throughout Europe by the fierce and reiterated attacks which it made on the freedom of the Press. In 1543 an elaborate list of prohibited books, now catalogued for the first time, was issued at Venice, and in the following year the faculty of theology in Paris produced a fuller Index, and contrived heavier penalties on the sale of improper works. Pope Paul IV. took advantage of the labours of the Inquisition in Venice, Milan, and Spain, to draw up the famous *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, of which so much has since been vaguely heard. He delivered the list in 1559 to the Inquisition in Rome, and this most formidable engine of literary tyranny was circulated throughout the Catholic world. In this document there were three alphabetical sections; the first comprising a list of authors whose entire writings were prohibited; the second specified works by authors otherwise held innocuous; the third, anonymous writings. It is noticeable that an appendix contained almost all existing editions of the Holy Scriptures. This Index, after a delay during which the theological faculties in all parts of Europe were consulted, was at length published, in 1564, at the close of the Council of Trent.

It would be tedious to continue the history of these Roman Indices, which those who are curious in the matter may follow in the learned compilations of such historians as Reusch and Mendham. A recent work by Hilgers (1904) may be indicated as a

useful source of information. But it is interesting, in examining the early censorship of books, to notice that "immorality," except in a violent form, rarely attracted the censure of the inquisitors, which was directed mainly against theological and philosophical speculation. Heresy was the game which the censors went forth to hunt, and their principal prey were "apostates, schismatics, and every species of sectary." In 1586, the business was taken out of the hands of the Inquisition, and placed in those of the Index Congregation, a sort of committee whose duty was to keep the list of prohibited books up to date, and to grant learned and pious men special permission to read, for a holy purpose, this or that condemned work. This Congregation has never ceased its labours, and although the spread of liberal opinion has made its zeal more and more nugatory, and though that zeal has itself abated, yet its action remains of a kind which no citizen of a free community, unless biased by prejudice, can regard with satisfaction.

The desire to restrict speculative thought, although it has by no means died out, has in late years given place to a zeal for decency. It is important to notice that the tendency of a censorship nowadays is to begin with the suppression of books scandalous to morals, and then to proceed to that of books which contravene the ethical and religious ideas accepted by society at the particular moment. This latter tendency is the one which particularly justifies a resistance to any form of extra-legal repression. It is necessary to insist that to place the existence of books at the mercy of a small group of men of whose fitness for so important a charge the public can know nothing is to endanger the advance of thought. A tribunal formed to-day to suppress a morbid novel may go on to-morrow to boycott a Darwin or a Renan. As this has been denied, it is worth while to draw attention to what was attempted so lately as 1859. My friend, Dr. P. Chalmers Mitchell, points out to me that Whewell, Murchison, and Sedgwick appealed to Owen to stamp out Chambers's *Vestiges of Creation*, which Sedgwick called "that beastly book." A little later, the same dignified authorities used similar phrases about Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The public language of such men as Bishop Wilberforce was a direct and passionate incentive to such suppression as was possible. It is perfectly certain that if the recently self-elected tribunal had existed in 1860, when the *Quarterly Review* issued its famous blast against the theory of natural selection, as a publication "absolutely incompatible with the Word of God," an appeal to it by Sedgwick, Whewell, Murchison, and Wilberforce, supported by the

scientific opinion of Owen, would have been instantly and completely successful, and the *Origin of Species* must have been withdrawn from circulation.

It is usless to pretend that such errors of judgment could not occur again. Men of light and leading in 1910 are not made of a different clay from those who represented science and society in 1860. It is always the unexampled that is unwelcome, and it is not because a Darwin is now celebrated at public banquets after half a century of fame that some one as original and as revolutionary as he will not be banned and boycotted when he takes us all by surprise. The whole history of criticism shows us that the most brilliantly equipped and most highly trained experts cannot be implicitly trusted when they censure a new theory of art or morals which runs counter to accepted tradition.

Nor is it enough that offences should be shown to exist, and that honest men should be impelled by a genuine wish to reform them. A sincere desire to check literary abuses and to maintain a high standard of decency never degenerated into more grotesque absurdity than during the reign of Charles X. in France. The incidents are too near our time to possess much literary interest, and it may be that they are generally forgotten. But it is worth our while, when we are told that acts of intellectual tyranny "could never occur again," to recollect that the *censure* of the Restoration began in a very moderate and reasonable determination to put down the general public circulation of papers inimical to the restored dynasty. But it grew with what it fed upon, and when, early in 1827, the National Guards were broken up for demanding a Free Press, the suppression of literature took forms that are almost incredible when we reflect that they were imposed upon the most cultivated capital of the world in the nineteenth century.

A capable and zealous priest, apparently a man of excellent intentions, the Abbé Mutin, offered himself and was accepted as the cat's-paw of the Government, and his "reports" became more and more sweeping. The cleverest writers of the day being the most revolutionary, literary merit itself became offensive to the Abbé Mutin. He discovered "outrages and attacks on the king, on morality, and on religion," in the most unlikely, and, one would have thought, the most innocent quarters. No less a person than Chateaubriand, having published a harmless brochure, *Les amis de la liberté de la presse*, immediately found his own writings condemned *en masse*. The classics did not escape. Voltaire, whom the Abbé Mutin called "the Great Corruptor," was not unnaturally condemned,

but Le Sage and Beaumarchais soon followed. The Abbé Mutin pursued his studies, and the *Télémaque* of Fénelon fell before him. La Rochefoucauld was banned and even the mild and virtuous Vauvenargues prohibited. Pascal had long been on the Index of the Roman Congregation. If the king had not died, it seems probable that pious Frenchmen would have found the whole of their classical literature by degrees denied to them. So, with ourselves, it would be easy for a censorship, slowly developing in a fanatical direction, to discover indecency in Shakespeare, attacks on the monarchy in Milton, irreligion in Shelley, and a dangerous tendency to dwell on the details of sedition in Walter Scott.

The discussions which have been provoked this winter by the attempt to institute a censorship of books cannot fail to be of public service. But it is not wise that those who engage in them should, on either side, speak otherwise than with respect of their opponents.

The entire controversy does no more than present, once again, that universal instinct which leads every active mind either to hide from excess of light by looking back on the past, or to seek for a further blaze in the unexplored horizons of the future. Those who shrink from liberty, and would artificially restrain its exercise, are but following an honourable impulse. We desire to acknowledge the excellence of their intentions and the purity of their motives. But we regret their imperfect comprehension of the laws of history, or rather their want of perception of the conditions of life. While mankind remains unaltered, and while there is not a single psychological manifestation in human character which we do not recognise as having existed in the early centuries of its history, the superficial part of conduct is improving every day, becoming more reasonable, more decent, more uniform. We may, or we may not, in this amelioration of the surface, see the evidences of hypocrisy. For my own part, I would rather see those of restraint, the want of means to do ill deeds preventing ill deeds from being done. Of the outward improvement there can be doubt only among those who are not acquainted with the records of the past.

Society, therefore, in its guarded conditions and its restricted opportunities, can be trusted, and must be trusted, to look after its literature itself. The responsibility should not be shifted from the head of each family to a semi-official and legally non-recognised tribunal of three or of thirty. We must not permit, at the behest of a momentary alarm, those who are more anxious to preserve the moral balance of the young than to extend their

sensibilities or to develop their intellect—we must not permit the most earnest and admirable of these monitors to tamper, further than the wisdom of the law directs, with the liberty of books. These moralists must be informed that there is something far worse than a liability to error, and that is, to be prevented from reaching, through a belt of error, up to higher and broader manifestations of the unconjectured Truth.

The First-born

By Edwin Pugh

Mrs. Moffat was a little plump woman with sleek grey hair and soft brown eyes that had a trick of wheedling confidences out of you. Her face was round and red. She had good teeth and a fleshy chin. She always wore little spiky pearl earrings and a massive gold brooch. Her dresses were generally nightmares of gorgeous colour. She was partial to velvets and brocaded dolmans.

Bill Moffat, her husband, was a tall, lean man with a heavily lined face and a long blue upper lip. He wore a stiff goatee on his chin, but was otherwise clean-shaven. He was a Primitive Methodist, and a regular attendant at the Mission Hall.

He and his wife were fonder of one another—in an unromantic way, of course—than any other two people I have ever met.

For twenty years they had waited and prayed for a child. They were, as has been said already, all that man and wife should be to one another; but their home lacked that tiny presence without which home can never be complete.

Every Wednesday night, when Brother Moffat—as he was called at the Mission Hall—rose to offer a prayer he dragged in an allusion to his wife and a petition for a child. His wife was shyer than she looked, and would only pray in public when called upon by the minister to do so. When she prayed she always spoke of Jesus as a baby.

They had been married just a little over nineteen years when one night Bill Moffat burst into the club-house with the glorious news. He sat down among us and chuckled like a child in a new pinafore with a scuttleful of coals. Then he rose and suddenly flung his cap high in the air, where it hung on a gas-jet until one of us hitched it off with a map-hook.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," he said; "but I'm that happy I could throw myself away." And then he fell to chuckling again.

"What is it?" we asked him.

He told us. "The wife broke it to me this morning," he said, "just as I was a-starting out to finish a job at Hackney

Downs. I wanted to come round and tell you all straight away, but I hadn't no time. And I only hope as that there job is finished proper, but I don't know. For my head's like a humming-top to-day. Punch it, Watty! I want to know it's there. Oh, very well then! I only hope it'll be a girl, that's all. Another Tilly, only littler." He uttered an ecstatic cry. "Fancy me with two Tillys!"

A minute later he rushed away to buy his wife some grapes.

On the following evening he invited all his friends, and a few others, to step across to his place. He had got something to show us, he said. We went. He took us to a corner of his yard and showed us a gibbet-like erection.

"What is it?" asked some one.

"Why, man, don't you see?" he said. "It's the framework for a swing. I set it up just before tea. Made it out o' some old deal boards that ha' been kicking about the yard this last three months. I don't know whether to paint it or stain it. What d'you think? Kids like colours, don't they? Supposing I did it in pink and yellow stripes, all zigzag. Or say I made it a motley green. Motley green's pretty."

"I don't quite see," objected Watty, "where he is——"

"She, you mean!"

"How d'you know it's going to be a she?"

"I've a presentiment. The wife thinks so too. She says it isn't to be expected as the Lord'll give her another William all to her own cheek. She fancies it would set her up too much. But, bless you, she's——"

"I was a-saying," repeated Watty severely, "as I don't see where the kid is to sit."

"Oh, I ain't made the seat yet. And there's a point. Would you cushion it? You see, leather's slippery and she might fall off. On the other hand, velvet harbours dust, which would spoil her new blue frock."

"Her new blue frock?"

"Yes. We've decided to dress her always in blue; and you can reckon pretty safe as we won't let her wear no old clobber. Not always the same shade o' blue, you understand. One day it would be a sort o' violet, and the next a kind o' pale Ammersmith, and so on. With a cream hat. One o' those broad-brimmed hats with a regular fountain o' feathers on top."

"I shouldn't advise you to start by making the kid stuck up," said Watty sagely. "Quiet greys and browns is best. They're neat and not peacocky."

"Now what harm can a bit o' colour do the poor little

innocent ?" Moffat exclaimed. "'Tisn't as if she was going to be born grown-up. Don't you see, if we always bring her up to dress in pretty clothes she won't think so much o' them when . . . And there's another point. D'you think—just for the sake of variety, like—as it would be better to chuck in a grey frock or a brown frock with a darker hat, now and then ?"

He insisted that we should stay and sup with him.

We found that he had installed Mrs. Moffat on the sofa with pillows behind her head and a rug over her knees. He would not suffer her to do so much as make a cup of tea. And when she laughed at his fussy solicitude for her ease and comfort, as she did frequently, he would say, "Remember, my dear !" and look very grave.

After that evening he was for ever inviting us to his house, and invariably he had something new to exhibit to us. One day it was a seesaw.

"I've made it extra strong," he explained, "so as it will bear me at the other end."

On another occasion it was a complicated arrangement of bells and plush and bone rings that he had bought in the City at a fabulous price. He was thinking of covering the bells with gold foil, he said, and having the name "Matilda Moffat" impressed on the velvet in silver lettering. But we told him how previous he was, and he gave way.

As the days went by the street got feverishly interested in the expected baby, and every morning a crowd of little women were sent to ask how Mrs. Moffat was, and could their mothers lend her anything. Bill took to collecting threepenny-pieces, and used to keep a store of them in his pocket to give to these children. And their numbers increased daily.

The child was born on the 10th of December. "Just comfortable for Christmas," as Bill said.

The news was brought to me by himself at a quarter-past five in the morning. It was quite dark when he strode into my room. (He had built every house in the street, and possessed duplicates of all the door-keys.) I started up with a frightened cry at sight of him.

He put his great hand over my mouth. I could smell the turps in his finger-nails.

"S-sh !" he whispered. "It's all over."

I sat up in bed and tried to understand what he was telling me. In the light of the candle that burned at the foot of my bed I could see his thin lips trembling. There was a filmy brightness in his eyes. His normally sallow cheeks were flushed.

"How is Mrs. Moffat?" I asked.

"As well as can be expected, the doctor says."

"And the little girl?"

"Well, you see, it isn't exactly what you might call a little girl," said Bill Moffat slowly. "It's a boy."

I congratulated him.

"Yes," he said; "I've no call to complain, though I had set my heart on a little girl. Those dolls will have to go, of course. Unless——"

He stood up and slapped his thigh and burst into loud laughter.

"Unless I put 'em by till the next one comes," he said.

His intense enjoyment of this poor wee jest was profound. For some minutes he could not speak, but stood with swelling cheeks and shaking sides, swaying to and fro in a racking ebullition of silent mirth. I let him have his laugh out.

"I hope you don't mind me a-waking you up at this time in the morning," he said. "But I couldn't rest till I'd told some one, and yours was the first key to hand. . . . Would you care to come across to see the kid?"

I did not like to say no, so scrambled out of bed and dressed myself.

"I don't mind telling you," said Bill in my ear, "because I know you won't think me proud for saying it, but it's the finest baby I have ever set eyes on, and I've set eyes on a many in my time. The nurse says as she never saw a finer, and so does the doctor."

He told me this on his doorstep.

We ascended the stairs together.

"Go on in," he said, pushing open a door on the first floor. I caught a glimpse of bedclothes, and drew back, blushing.

"Mrs. Moffat——" I stammered.

"Dear heart o' me!" he cried. "She won't mind you. You're but a kid to her."

"S-sh!" hissed the nurse.

"Close that door," said the doctor. "You're letting in a draught."

Bill Moffat pushed me into the room, and followed at my heels.

"Here's the young writing gentleman come to see you, Tilly," he said.

Mrs. Moffat gave me a faint, tired smile, and, as she stirred, with some vague intention of shaking hands with me, I think, I heard a tiny wheezing cry, and saw a round object, like an inflamed dumpling, emerge from beneath the bedclothes.

"There he is!" said Bill proudly. "Ain't he a beauty?"

I stooped down and kissed the dumpling, which tasted fluffy.

Bill shook hands with me at parting and asked me what I thought of the child. I did not tell him. "I knew you would think so," he said.

I went back to my lonely lodgings, and was sitting down at my desk to take advantage of the silent hours when he reappeared again in my room.

"The doctor won't have me within hailing distance of the kid," he said ruefully. "Says I make so much noise I excite Tilly. May I stay here for a bit? You can go on with your writing. I won't disturb you."

But I could not write, knowing that he was sitting there watching me, just beyond the circle of light that my lamp made in the darkness. I looked up and watched him furtively, every now and then. Once it seemed to me that he was singing silently.

At last he rose.

"It's no good," he said. "I can't keep away from Tilly. You'll excuse my going. . . . I suppose. . . . But no; I haven't any right to ask you such a favour."

"May I come and sit with you?"

"It's what I was going to ask. And it's real good of you to offer. You see, it's so dreadful quiet over there, and me being so excited the quietness weighs on me like a ton o' feathers. And if I got noisy you could check me a bit."

So once more I put on my hat and accompanied him to his home. We went into the parlour and sat there before the fire smoking and talking in whispers until eight o'clock. Then other visitors came to see Bill. Being all men, they were very embarrassed.

"We've heard of it," said one.

"Ah! Have a cigar," said Bill.

"The news was brought to me ten minutes . . . no, I tell a lie! . . . twelve minutes and a half ago," said another.

"Have a cigar," said Bill.

"As a father myself," said a third, "I can sympathise with you."

"Have a cigar," said Bill.

He pushed the box toward them and mixed five glasses of stiff grog. Then he sat and beamed on his visitors whilst they smoked and sipped, until they rose to go. They stayed only a few minutes.

"It's what I call real kind and friendly, though," said Bill

when they had gone. "Dear heart o' me! what have I done to deserve so many pals and so much joy!"

Time passed slowly. We said little, but sat and stared at dark corners of the room until we were giddy and dazed. It was a queer little room, with a lot of good furniture and bad, pictures in it. As the darkness of night lifted the fog of day descended. Soon there was a murky yellow halo round the lamp. Bill looked up with an air of inspiration and said:

"Breakfast! Why not?"

I accepted the suggestion gladly, and he led me into the kitchen. There Tilly's sister Jane prepared us a smoking repast. I was hungry and ate a good meal, but Bill could eat nothing, even though he paused between each attack upon his food to keep his cigar alight.

"I never enjoyed bloaters less," he informed me in confidence afterwards. "I'm not used to grubbing without Tilly, you see. If you've done we'll get out of it. . . . Have a cigar."

We returned to the parlour and stayed there until ten o'clock.

At ten o'clock Bill, who had been chuckling deeply for some minutes, burst into a harsh guffaw.

"Fancy me not thinking of it before," he said.

I looked up. "Thinking of what?" I asked.

"Come outside and I'll show you."

I rose at his bidding and followed him into the yard. He led me to the gateway and pointed to the inscription thereon.

"What does that there sign say?" he demanded.

"*William Moffat, Builder and House Decorator*," I replied.

"Well, it ain't William Moffat now. It's William Moffat and Son. Don't you see? I'll alter it at once."

"It's too dark," I objected.

"A couple o' naphtha flares will do away wi' that difficulty, sharp," he replied. "It's a long time since I worked with a frost on; but I'll do it to-day, or my name ain't Bill Moffat. Dear heart! Fancy me not thinking o' that before!"

He ran back to his workshop and lit the gas there. He dragged out pots of paint and brushes and mahlsticks and pieces of rag and oddments of chalk—all the varied paraphernalia of his craft. I lolled on a bench and watched him.

"It's going to be a fair knock-out," he announced, as he mixed ingredients in a gallipot. "Something more gorgeous than any other signboard in London. You wait."

He ran back to the gate. He fixed up two naphtha lamps on their iron pedestals and lit them. Then he set to work. I stood and watched him whilst he obliterated the old sign and

limned in a rough adumbration of the new one. When I perceived that he had forgotten my presence I stole quietly back to my rooms.

I became absorbed in my work, and banished further thought of Bill Moffat and his first-born until late in the afternoon. Then, remembering him with a sudden pang of self-reproach, I went to my window and looked out upon the street.

The fog had thinned a little. In the heart of the shifting haze I could see two golden splashes of light. The naphtha lamps were still burning. I hurried downstairs and crossed the road and walked toward them.

A few men and women lingered around the gateway, but Bill Moffat was not there. I supposed that he had gone into the house or back to his workshop. But when I looked at the loiterers I knew that something bad had happened. I could not conjecture what it might be.

I joined the group and listened to the remarks of my companions.

"It does seem a shame," said one man to another. "I can't a-bear to see it."

This remark quickened my curiosity and increased my dread.

"D'you think we ought to put 'em out?" the other man asked. "He's mortal touchy about some things, it seems."

"But think o' the oil that's being wasted. Them there lamps burn more than you'd think."

"And he isn't likely to come back and finish the job to-night, either. I expect he's forgot all about it."

I went up to the two men. They were strangers to me. "What has happened?" I asked them.

"It's like this here," said one. "Mrs. Moffat had a baby this morning. Perhaps you heard about it?"

"Yes. . . . Well?"

The man bit his moustache and jerked his head toward his mate.

"Tell him, Tom," he said.

"You see, guv'nor, I was a-standing watching him as it might be there," said Tom, "when all of a sudden somebody—a woman—comes out o' the house and stands on the step looking about her, wild-like. Mr. Moffat he sees her and he shouts out: 'All well, Jane?' he says. She didn't answer him at once; and then I sees him get up all in a tremble and go toward her. 'What's up?' he says, a bit thick and husky. 'Anything gone wrong?' he says. 'Tilly . . .?' he says, and stops short. 'Tilly's all right,' the woman says. And I knew by the way she

said it as some one was all wrong. 'The baby?' he says. 'My little son?' he says. The woman she burst out a-crying and turned to run away. He caught hold of her arm, and pulled her back and twisted her round. And I see his face was all grey and wet and horrible. 'Tell me,' he says, very sharp, 'is—is my little baby dead?' he says. 'Yes,' she says, a-nodding of her head. He gives a little grunt, for all the world as if some one had hit him on the mark. Then he went and propped his arm agin that wall over there, and laid his head on his arm, and give way unmanly. 'Cheer up, matey,' I says to him. 'Babies is common enough,' I says. 'Better luck next time,' I says. And I slapped him on the back, friendly. . . . He chucked my arm away, and I thought he was going to hit me. And he says, 'Damn you!' he says. Like that! 'God forgive me!' he says, and went into the house."

Napoleon in Italy

By I. Zangwill

As I creep humbly through this proud and prodigious Italy, peeping into palaces and passing yearningly before masterpieces, to the maddening chatter of concierges and sacristans, I am constantly stumbling upon the footsteps of him who made the grand tour in the high sense of the words. Not the British heir of bygone centuries with his mentor and his letters of introduction, not even his noble father with the family coach. No, these were pigmies little taller than myself. Your sublime tourist was Napoleon, who strode over the holy land of Beauty like a Brobdingnagian over Lilliput. He came, he saw, he commanded. He looked at a picture, a pillar, a statue—and despatched it to France. He gazed at Lombard's iron crown—and put it on. He beheld Milan Cathedral—and it became the scene of his coronation, with blessing of clergy and the old feudal homage. He perceived an ornate ducal bed—and slept in it, the poor duke a-cold. He rode through the ancient streets, not Baedeker, but cocked hat in hand, graciously acknowledging the loyal cheers of the ancient stock. He visited Venice—and wound up the Republic. He admired St. Mark's—and haled its bronze horses to Paris; transferring to it the Patriarchate as in compensation. The Patriarchal Palace itself he turned into barracks; superfluous monasteries and churches were shut up. He even destroyed, doubtless in the same righteous indignation, the lion's head over "the lion's mouth" in the Palace of the Doges, while the *Bucentaur*, their gorgeous galley, he burnt to extract the gold.

But he was not merely destructive and rapacious. The founder of the Code Napoléon repaired the amphitheatre of Verona, and resumed the neglected building of the façade of Milan Cathedral, and opened up the Simplon route to Italy, and marked its terminus by the Triumphal Arch of Milan. And all this and a hundred other feats of construction in the breathing-spaces of his Titanic single-handed fight against embattled Europe. Not seldom, as I passed my wood-shop in Venice,

with its caligraphic placard *All' Ingrosso e al Minuto*, did I think of the Corsican superman, with his wholesale and retail dealings with the little breed of mankind. Perhaps to establish "the Kingdom of Italy," with twenty-four departments and his son-in-law as viceroy, and to turn the little district of Bassano into a duchy for his secretary were, to Napoleon, feats of the same apparent calibre. Even so we stride as carelessly over a brooklet as over a puddle. Surely there is a fascinating book to be written on Napoleon in Italy, as a change from the countless Napoleons in St. Helena or the flood of foolish volumes upon his mistresses.

And a final appraisement of Napoleon still remains to seek. The little fat man who had "the genius to be loved," and who provided for his family by seating them on European thrones, has long since ceased to be the ogre with whom British babes were frighted, though he has not yet become Heine's divine being done to death by British Philistinism. Carlyle classed him among his "Heroes" and credited him with insight because, when those around him proved there was no God, he looked up at the stars and asked, "Who made all that?" But this was surely no index of profundity—merely a theism of Pure Reason and an illustration of Napoleon's peculiar interest in *action*. "Who *made* all that?" Making, doing, that was his essential secret—unresting activity, rapid striking, utilisation of every moment. He was as alert after victory as others after defeat. Was one combination destroyed, his nimble and exhaustless energy instantly fashioned an alternative. Mobility of brain and immobility of soul—these were his gifts in a crisis. When all was lost and himself a captive, "What is the use of grumbling?" he asked his attendants. "Nothing can be *done*." The tragedy of Napoleon was thus the obverse of the tragedy of Hamlet, whose burden lay precisely in there being something to be done. Imagine the great demiurge at work in these days of telegraphy and steam, motor-cars and aeroplanes. What might he not have achieved! As it was, he just missed creating the United States of Europe. Anatole France accuses him of having taken soldiers too seriously. As well accuse an engineer of taking cranes and levers too seriously. Soldiers were the indispensable instruments by which Napoleon raised himself to the level of those more commonplace rulers of Europe who had found their cradles suspended on the heights. It is the German Emperor who takes soldiers too seriously, who marshals them with the solemnity of a child playing with his wooden regiments. And the Kaiser, already in the purple, has not Napoleon's excuse. His is simply

a false and reactionary view of life, as of a housemaid who adores uniforms. But Napoleon would have played his Machiavellian game equally with grocers; and, indeed, his lifelong ambition to sap British commerce was conceived in the spirit of a Titanic tradesman, who knows better than to count corpses. He was the mediæval despot magnified many diameters, playing with countries and nations instead of with towns and tribes, and sweeping in his winnings across the green table of earth as in some game of the gods. As a Messiah of Pure Reason, an Apostle of the People, he was able, like Mohammed, to back the Word with the Sword, and, less veracious than the prophet of the desert, to combine for the making of History its two great factors of force and fraud. Through him, accordingly, history made a leap, proceeding by earthquake and catastrophe instead of by patient cumulation and attrition. He was a cosmic force—a force of Nature, as he truthfully claimed—a *terremoto* that tumbled the stagnant old order about the ears of Courts and Churches.

True, after the earthquake the old slow, stubborn forces reassert themselves; but the configuration of the land has been irrevocably changed. The *Maya*, the illusion of Royalty, comes slowly back, for it is a world of unreason. But the feudal order throughout Europe will never wholly recover from the shock of Napoleon. Unfortunately, from a Messiah he glided into a Magnificent One, and the marriage with Marie Louise, at first perhaps a mere cold-blooded chess-move to establish his dynasty, subtly reduced him into accepting Royalty at its own and the popular valuation. He had married beneath him, and Nemesis followed. The dyer's hand was subdued to that it worked in, and Napoleon sank into a snob. His true Waterloo was spiritual. The actual Waterloo was a moral victory.

There is in Milan a queer museum called "The Gallery of Knowledge and Study," the collection of which was begun by a "Noble Milanese," and the first catalogue of which was published in Latin in 1666. Here, amid sea-shells, miniatures, old maps, pottery, bronzes, silkworm analyses, and old round mirrors in great square frames, may now be seen a pair of yellow gloves which once covered the iron hands, together with the cobbler's measure of that foot which once stamped on the world. There is an air of coquetry about the pointed toe. A captain's brevet, signed by the "First Consul" and headed "French Republic," serves as a reminder of the earlier phase. The humour of museums has placed these relics in a case with those of other "illustrious men"—to wit, two Popes and Saint Carlo,

the dominant saint of the district (who is just celebrating his tercentenary).

But the Triumphal Arch remains Napoleon's chief monument at Milan, though it is become a sort of Vicar of Bray in stone. For when Napoleon fell the Austrian Emperor replaced the chronicle of French victories by bas-reliefs of defeats and re-christened it an Arch of Peace. And when in turn Lombardy was liberated by Victor Emmanuel new inscriptions converted it into an Arch of Freedom. One can imagine the stone singing, like the Temple of Memnon at sunrise:

> But whatsoever king shall reign,
> Still *I*'ll be the Arch of Triumph.

Such mutations in the significance of monuments, however they deface and blur history, are not unnatural amid the vicissitudes of Italy; and after all an arch or a pillar is but an arch or a pillar.

But even a statue is liable to be dethroned. In Rimini in 1614 the Commune, grateful to the Pope (Paolo V.), commemorated him in bronze in the beautiful Piazza of the Fountain, the Fountain whose harmonious fall pleased the ear of Leonardo da Vinci. The statue is elaborate and handsome, with bas-reliefs in the seat and the Papal mantle, showing in one place the city in perspective. But during the Cisalpine Republic, thanks again to Napoleon, no Pope could keep his place in Rimini, and as the simplest way of preserving him on this favoured site the municipality erased his epitaph and re-christened him Saint Gaudenzo. Gaudenzo was the martyr Bishop of Rimini, the Protector of the City. This unearned increment was not the Saint's first, for the Church of S. Gaudenzo had been erected on the basis of a Temple of Jove. To annex the glories of both Jove and Pope is indeed a singular fortune, even in the ironic changes and chances we call history. But Napoleon, in the days when he ordered the Temple of Malatesta to be the Cathedral of Rimini, was annexing even the functions of both Pope and Jove. For he was also rearranging Europe after Austerlitz and giving the quietus to the Holy Roman Empire.

Time's Laughing-stocks*

By Maurice Hewlett

To him who is of the middle south-west, which is Wessex, these poems will come as the smell of the Downs. They are vocal of it; and as the senses play tricks, and a call to one will cry up another, so it is that upon the dipping flight of the Wessex intonation comes sharply and certainly the fragrance of her grey-green pastures.

> Till, the upper roadway quitting,
> I adventured on the open drouthy downland thinly grassed,
> While the spry white scuts of conies flashed before me, earthward flitting,
> And an arid wind went past.
>
> Round about me bulged the barrows
> As before, in antique silence—immemorial funeral piles—
> Where the sleek herds trampled daily the remains of flint-tipt arrows
> 'Mid the thyme and camomiles.

There's the smell, bittersweet and tonic; but it's the melody gives it me, and not the enumeration. This is to succeed in poetry, when you evoke emotion by the very structure of your verse; and it is a success apparently of the very highest kind of lyrical poetry—as Shelley's—and of the very naive, such as you get in the Border Ballads. But Mr. Hardy has another triumph to his hand which is rarer still, which is hardly scored by any national poetry since that of Hellas, and which is to suggest by matter as well as manner, by substance as by form. His rhythms seem to me to be nearly always right, and I shall speak of them presently; but so are his subjects, and so his philosophy. The very soul of the Downs inspires them: that endlong patience, that acquaintance with grief, that frailty and that acceptance of it, which have been forced upon us by our centuries of servitude. It's a homespun philosophy, plain hodden-grey, neither for soaring nor for sinking. It is like the hills which bred it in us—rounded turfy bosses, broad-shouldered ridges, never salient, nor sharp, nor boldly thrown up against

* *Time's Laughing-stocks, and other Verses*, By Thomas Hardy. Macmillan.

the sky: earth of earth, as we are ourselves. There's no revolt, there's no quarrel with Fate; and there's no sense of sin either.

The roadside elms pass by me,—
Why do I sink with shame
When the birds a-perch there eye me?
They, too, have done the same.

That is the maid who is maid no more, justifying herself not to escape her portion, but rather to reassure her instinct. And here, in one line, is the mother, relating but not reprobating the tragedy of her girl.

I bore a daughter flower-fair,
In Pydel Vale, alas for me;
I joyed to mother one so rare,
But dead and gone I now would be.

Men looked and loved her as she grew,
And she was won, alas for me;
She told me nothing, but I knew,
And saw that sorrow was to be.

That line, which I italicise, gives you our Wessex fatalism: revolt impossible, escape not looked for, nor asked for (in fact, neither here nor there), grief but a natural vent. We are the most pagan folk left in England, taking what comes for act of God, whether it be pleasure or pain, sins of men or woes of women. Of course we are fatalists; that's our only help. We know that "sorrow was to be," and sigh, and bend our backs to our work. Do we look for betterment elsewhere? Conventionally we do, and with the lips; but I believe that Mr. Hardy, who is our thinker as well as our poet, voices the unreasoned attitude of us all in these three stanzas, which he rightly describes as being "in the minor key." None other beseems earth-born man confronted with the skies.

Let me enjoy the earth no less
Because the all-enacting Might
That fashioned forth its loveliness
Hath other aims than my delight.

About my path there flits a Fair,
Who throws me not a word or sigh;
I will find charm in her uncare,
And laud those lips not meant for mine

* * *

Perhaps some day, toward Paradise
And all its blest—if such should be—
I shall lift glad, afar-off eyes,
Though it contain no place for me.

That is stoicism, finely put, finelier than any one of us has ever put it. But you may be a disciple of Zeno though you have never walked with Epictetus in the Portico; and Mr. Hardy is one of us, articulate, founded, four-square to all the airts of doctrine. He has done greatly in his novels to reveal the peasant but greatlier here. His novels are, it may be, overburdened with exposition and overcharged with romance. The one excess throws out of balance *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the other certainly impairs *Far from the Madding Crowd*. I can think that only *The Woodlanders* and *The Return of the Native*—his most lyrical novels—have the facts so truly interwoven with the fabric as the greatest of these poems.

Of this extremely original and moving body of poetry, those parts which have moved me most are the narratives, not necessarily by their narrative power (though they have that), but rather for their perfect harmony of matter and spirit, of tale and music.

The finest of them in order seem to me to be "Revisitation," from which I quoted above its savour of the Downs; "A Trampwoman's Tragedy," a haunting tale with a haunting melody:

> From Wynyard's Gap the livelong day,
> The livelong day,
> We beat afoot the northward way
> We had travelled times before.
> The sun-blaze burning on our backs,
> Our shoulders sticking to our packs,
> By fosse-way, fields and turnpike tracks
> We skirted sad Sedge-moor;—

then "The Sunday Morning Tragedy" (of the sorrow that "was to be"); then "The Rash Bride," for the sake of its pounding music—

> We Christmas-carolled down the Vale, and up the Vale, and round the Vale;

lastly, "A Wife and Another," which is a tale of magnanimity, beautifully written, with a simplicity like Shakespeare's greatest. I think that these poems will assign Mr. Hardy his place upon Parnassus. And now, what is that place?

It is apart, and in a very small company, the company of those few and rare ones who could speak for their dumb fellows what every one of them knew. Of a totally different earth, of sadder cast, more guarded eyes, he stands, I believe, side by side with Burns. William Barnes had a tang of the same earth in his rhymes, and so has Mr. A. E. Housman, whether got by

nature or the grace of God, or both, I don't know. This tang, indeed, had Burns. No poet can voice the soil who has not sprung from a root deep down in it. Save for such rare accidentals as these poets I have named—Burns, Barnes, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Housman—we might never know that the peasant is of the kind we all are of, so taciturn he creeps about his fields, ploughing and sowing, or folded in his cloak, hands on staff and chin on hands, stands gazing out over his rolling pastures, in whose escarpments the sheep swarm like maggots in cheese, or lie of nights like tombs in a Moorish hill-cemetery. We should never know to the full, I ought to have said; because Burns and Barnes and Mr. Hardy have a common ancestor in the Broadside, that single-sheet, black-printed, endless ballad of the country—Wiltshire Garland, Gloucestershire Posy, Berkshire Tragedy, or what not—which unwinds in halting verse some local portent, and only by what it does not say, by what it leaves half told, reveals something of the local life. Quavered in grey market-places, in tavern parlours, before wintry farmhouse windows, the Broadside is genuine folk-poetry, the common life of field and hedgerow rendered in a music as uncouth and creeping and unlettered as itself. Mr. Hardy, with this life in him, bone of his bone, as you may say, peasant articulate, informed by Art and Thought, has gone far beyond this stammering stuff, of course. He can voice, he has voiced, in this book the whole of our Wessex mystery to him who will hear it.

In so hailing him he will know whether I mean him honour or not, whether I can conceive a better equipment or better origin for any man of our nation. *Glebæ ascriptus*—and why not? To what else should we cling, or what better can we know, or sing of? Indeed I do mean him honour.

I find that I have not said enough of the extraordinary art with which it has been done. It is perfectly Greek in its simplicity and freedom from ornament; there is not an adjective too much, not an augmentive, and yet it is never bald; and though it renders highly complex matter, it is never difficult. No more suggestive contrast can be than one which Mr. Hardy provokes, in one poem, with Browning. "The Noble Lady's Tale" is Browningesque in rhythm and in subject: a soliloquy which opens thus:

> We moved with pensive paces,
> I and he,
> And bent our faded faces
> Wistfully,
> For something troubled him, and troubled me.

The metre, you will see, is Browning's, and the matter also: the lees of a romance, disillusion at grips with memory—that *nessun' maggior dolore* of a woman with a history. To my mind the direct and literal narration has a force of revelation which Browning rarely achieved, unless, as in parts of "The Ring and the Book," the weightiness of his subject drove him to the same austere economy. Let "The Noble Lady's Tale" be read, and then "Love Among the Ruins."

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Singing in the Village

By Leo Tolstoy

Voices and an accordion sounded as if close by, though through the mist nobody could be seen. It was a work-day morning, and I was surprised to hear music.

"Oh, it's the recruits' leave-taking," thought I, remembering that I had heard something a few days before, about five men being drawn from our village. Involuntarily attracted by the merry song, I went in the direction whence it proceeded.

As I approached the singers, the sound of song and accordion suddenly stopped. The singers, that is the lads who were leave-taking, entered the double-fronted brick cottage belonging to the father of one of them. Before the door stood a small group of women, girls, and children.

While I was finding out whose sons were going, and why they had entered that cottage, the lads themselves, accompanied by their mothers and sisters, came out at the door. There were five of them: four bachelors and one married man. Our village is near the town where nearly all these conscripts had worked. They were dressed town-fashion, evidently wearing their best clothes: pea-jackets, new caps, and high, showy boots. Conspicuous among them was a young fellow, well built though not tall, with a sweet, merry, expressive face, a small beard and moustache just beginning to sprout, and bright hazel eyes. As he came out, he at once took a big, expensive-looking accordion that was hanging over his shoulders, and having bowed to me, started playing the merry tune of "Bárynya," running his fingers nimbly over the keys and keeping exact time, as he moved with rhythmic step jauntily down the road.

Beside him walked a thick-set, fair-haired lad, also of medium height. He looked gaily from side to side, and sang seconds with spirit, in harmony with the first singer. He was the married one. These two walked ahead of the other three, who were also well dressed, and not remarkable in any way except that one of them was tall.

Together with the crowd I followed the lads. All their

songs were merry, and no expression of grief was heard while the procession was going along; but as soon as we came to the next house at which the lads were to be treated, the lamentations of the women began. It was difficult to make out what they were saying; only a word here and there could be distinguished: "death . . . father and mother . . . native land . . ." and after every verse, the woman who led the chanting took a deep breath, and burst out into long-drawn moans, followed by hysterical laughter. The women were the mothers and sisters of the conscripts. Beside the lamentations of these relatives, one heard the admonitions of their friends.

"Now then, Matryóna, that's enough! You must be tired out," I heard one woman say, consoling another who was lamenting.

The lads entered the cottage. I remained outside talking with a peasant acquaintance, Vasíly Oréhof, a former pupil of mine. His son, one of the five, was the married man who had been singing seconds as he went along.

"Well," I said, "it is a pity!"

"What's to be done? Pity or not, one has to serve."

And he told me of his domestic affairs. He had three sons: the eldest was living at home, the second was now being taken, and a third (who like the second had gone away to work) was contributing dutifully to the support of the home. The one who was leaving had evidently not sent home much.

"He has married a townswoman. His wife is not fit for our work. He is a lopped-off branch and thinks only of keeping himself. To be sure, it's a pity, but it can't be helped!"

While we were talking, the lads came out into the street, and the lamentations, shrieks, laughter, and adjurations recommenced. After standing about for some five minutes, the procession moved on with songs and accordion accompaniment. One could not help marvelling at the energy and spirit of the player, as he beat time accurately, stamped his foot, stopped short, and then, after a pause, again took up the melody most merrily, exactly on the right beat, while he gazed around with his kind, hazel eyes. Evidently he had a real and great talent for music.

I looked at him, and (so at least it seemed to me) he felt abashed when he met my eyes, and with a twitch of his brows he turned away, and again burst out with even more spirit than before. When we reached the fifth and last of the cottages, the lads entered and I followed them. All five of them were made to sit round a table covered with a cloth, on which were bread and vódka. The host, the man I had been talking to, who was

now to take leave of his married son, poured out the vódka and handed it round. The lads hardly drank at all (at most a quarter of a glass) or even handed it back after just raising it to their lips. The hostess cut some bread, and served slices round to eat with the vódka.

While I was looking at the lads, a woman, dressed in clothes that seemed to me strange and incongruous, got down from the top of the oven, close to where I sat. She wore a light green dress (silk, I think) with fashionable trimmings, and high-heeled boots. Her fair hair was arranged in quite the modern style, like a large round cap, and she wore big, ring-shaped, gold earrings. Her face was neither sad nor cheerful, but looked as if she were offended.

After getting down, she went out into the passage, clattering with the heels of her new boots and paying no heed to the lads. All about this woman—her clothing, the offended expression of her face, and above all her earrings—was so foreign to the surroundings, that I could not understand how she had come to be on the top of Vasíly Oréhof's oven. I asked a woman sitting near me who she was.

"Vasíly's daughter-in-law; she has been a housemaid," was the answer.

The host began offering vódka a third time, but the lads refused, rose, said grace, thanked the hosts, and went out.

In the street, the lamentations recommenced at once. The first to raise her voice was a very old woman with a bent back. She lamented in such a peculiarly piteous voice, and wailed so, that the women kept soothing the sobbing, staggering old creature, and supported her by her elbows.

"Who is she?" I inquired.

"Why, it's his granny; Vasíly's mother, that is."

The old woman burst into hysterical laughter and fell into the arms of the women who supported her, and just then the procession started again, and again the accordion and the merry voices struck up their tune. At the end of the village the procession was overtaken by the carts which were to carry the conscripts to the District Office. The weeping and wailing stopped. The accordion-player, getting more and more elated, bending his head to one side and resting on one foot, turned out the toes of the other and stamped with it, while his fingers produced brilliant *fioritures*, and exactly at the right instant the bold, high, merry tones of his song, and the seconds of Vasíly's son, again chimed in. Old and young, and especially the children who surrounded the crowd, and I with them, fixed their eyes admiringly on the singer.

"He is clever, the rascal!" said one of the peasants.

"'Sorrow weeps, and sorrow sings!'" replied another.

At that moment one of the young fellows whom we were seeing off—the tall one—came up with long, energetic strides, and stooped to speak to the one who played the accordion.

"What a fine fellow," I thought; "they will put him in the Guards." I did not know who he was or what house he belonged to.

"Whose son is that one? That gallant fellow?" I asked a little old man, pointing to the fine lad.

The old man raised his cap and bowed to me, but did not hear my question.

"What did you say?" asked he.

I had not recognised him, but as soon as he spoke I knew him at once. He is a hard-working, good peasant who, as often happens, seems specially marked out for misfortune: first two horses were stolen from him, then his house burnt down, and then his wife died. I had not seen Prokófey for a long time and remembered him as a bright red-haired man of medium height; whereas he was now not red, but quite grey-haired, and small.

"Ah, Prokófey, it's you!" I said. "I was asking whose son that fine fellow is—that one who has just spoken to Alexander?"

"That one?" Prokófey replied, pointing with a motion of his head to the tall lad. He shook his head and mumbled something I did not understand.

"I'm asking whose son the lad is?" I repeated, and turned to look at Prokófey.

His face was puckered and his jaw trembled.

"He's mine!" he muttered, and turning away and hiding his face in his hand, began to whimper like a child.

And only then, after the two words, "He's mine!" spoken by Prokófey, did I realise, not only in my mind but in my whole being, the horror of what was taking place before my eyes that memorable misty morning. All the disjointed, incomprehensible, strange things I had seen suddenly acquired a simple, clear, and terrible significance. I became painfully ashamed of having looked on as at an interesting spectacle. I stopped, conscious of having acted ill, and I turned to go home.

And to think that these things are at the present moment being done to tens of thousands of men all over Russia, and have been done, and will long continue to be done, to the meek, wise, and saintly Russian people, who are so cruelly and treacherously deceived!

(*Translated by* L. and A. Maude)

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The Wife of Altamont

By Violet Hunt

XXIX

Going past the old Castle mill on her way to the shore next day Betsey met Veere and quietly adjusted her step to his as she had adjusted it to so many another idiosyncrasy. He passed with her through the ancient postern gate that pierced the curtain wall, and thence by some topsy-turvy steps descended to the level of the sands.

He seemed at a loose end, isolated, alone, he the owner, the host, the giver of this splendid holiday feast at Angernoune.

"I suppose you knew yesterday," said he, alluding to the tidings of her husband's death. "I only saw it, with others, in the papers this morning. You won't want me to condole?"

The young widow shivered. This was the sort of thing he said—this was the reason the fine-strung, fastidious people up there had left him to his own devices this morning—and every morning nearly—to the handling of the woman who really loved him and understood him.

"Condole, yes, with Ada!" would have been her defiant reply a few months ago, but not now. She had done with surface bitterness—she who was sunk deep in a sea of despair, of which bitterness is but the foam and froth. Nowadays she would ill deserve Evangeline Simmons's oft-repeated praise of her cynicism. She drifted now, unresisting, unresenting, with the grey flood that had taken her, which she had once fought against, conspired against, and which had, through Love, overcome her. She was living in the abeyance she had always protested against, the cage from which she had once struggled fiercely to be free. The door was open now, or at least ajar, yet she stayed! Her life was a dreary *fait accompli* which even her convict husband's death could not alter. She philosophised a little, flirted a little with the gentle Vicar and his ungentle boys, was very good to Ada, and that was all. What a life!

Together, she and Ernest descended into the field, half

garden and half cricket ground, which Sir Joris had made of the vast undisciplined sand-dunes lying up against the castle rock of Angernoune. Fussy, utilitarian, he had blasted the wind-blown sand of a century's drifting and silting, scraped it's kindly softening mask from the serried rampart, contradicting and obscuring the natural droop of the cliff, and laid the substance thus gained down here, a wide dull expanse, for the prosecution of tennis and the arts of peace. So that the long curtain wall above, whence the faced stones had fallen away, been shot away, had weathered away, till in some places it showed nothing but coarse inside rubble, rose sheer out of the horny-looking basalt, suggesting savage scarped teeth from which the gums had been peeled. The two stood and looked up at it, with rather mixed feelings, the romanticist, and the practical engineer. They were, however, mysteriously one. Veere's intense loneliness dropped from him like a veil, and her sullen pessimism.

He gently took hold of her elbow and jogged it. She turned, flashed her eyes at him. Then they both laughed, as Adam and his faulty Eve may have done in that first wild moment, when they had passed beyond the flaming sword that shut them off from the rigours of Paradise. They were now morally free; the aching back and sweating brow would come later. . . .

"Take a walk with me," he begged. "A real walk!"

A touch of primordial huff impelled her to put him off. She had had so few opportunities of exercising femininity lately.

"Would it be safe?"

"Do you mean might it jeopardise my alliance? Oh no, nothing can interfere with that, not even her present fancy for Lee-Brice. That's only, so far, relative to me. She may get caught, though. Hardly, for she's a business woman, my little Dobrée."

"A woman after your own heart."

"One would think so," he said gloomily. "All I know is, she means to have a place—and incidentally—me! The place, though, is the thing, the place that was once her own. Do you know that?"

"I know it was built by an Earl of Angernoune."

"William Rufus, to begin with. The Angernounes have royal blood in their veins. Well—I—or my like—took it from her in the Wars of the Roses. I've been mugging up some history lately, and arranging it in my mind from my point of view—the utilitarian. I find Dobrée's people were the Old and we were the New, then, as now. Now we buy their estates, then we took 'em. I fought Dobrée—broke her—broke her

power, and now that she is harmless, I am willing to reinstate her, by marriage, the usual way. . . . Do you see those?" He pointed to the immense masses of casing of the wall that dotted the Castle green.

"Those lumps of petrified plum-pudding!"

"Yes, a conglomerate of stone and mud and Roman cement. The old Saxon masons had an inkling of the secret—the Romans left it behind them. We can't recover it. It resists even a fall like that, of six hundred feet or so. That portentous mass of embattled masonry was Angernoune—its strength. Well, I reduced it, flung it down with my modern artillery. I see myself here, young Edward of York, say, perched on that rising knoll over there, opposite the Lancastrian stronghold—I, with my modern ideas and my travelled minions, home from Italy, laughing at the antiquated defence of the old *régime*. They persuaded me to adopt some of the novelties in offensive weapons—they cost a lot, then. Old Margaret of Anjou's captain in here, Sir Ralph Gascoigne—I always think she was a kind of mediæval Victoria—felt pretty safe, when he saw the Yorks mounting their cannon on the knoll, for he supposed them the rotten old tools he was accustomed to, fixed things, used only to frighten the horses—and the men. He wasn't up to the great new gun "Dision" that sent a ball slap through his lodging, and destroyed his confidence and battered the place down about his ears in no time! That's where the ball went in—there, where Dobrée's new Liberty bedroom has been built! He capitulated, poor dear, of course. They, the besiegers—I mean I—I was able to eat my Christmas dinner in Angernoune. Kymarays, Thomas of Lancaster's place, fell too, in the same week. An end of the old order. . . . Betsey, tell me, are you going to America, now?"

They had walked a good half-mile along the links, and now they sat side by side in a cleft of the sand-hills, like a holiday couple. She was a vertical line, he a horizontal one.

"America!" said she, "how did you get there from the great gun Dision? Oh, I see! The old and the new."

"Yes, yes, don't be silly. It reminded me of something you threw out a month or two ago." She stared. "*Are* you going to America?"

"No, not now."

"Why not?"

"Stupid!"

She just touched his cheek with the tip of a long bit of bent grass. She was stiff with nerves, as she always was when the hour struck for her to lead them on one of the little amorous attacks

that she every now and then permitted herself. An agonised desperate sortie, to be conducted with spirit, while the retreat must be masked and covered by such *insouciance* as she could muster. Again, as oft before, it was a failure, and she subsided into her usual soft inertia.

"Why am I stupid?" he had retorted angrily, and she had averted her eyes, while he continued:

"You wanted to go—before—it was the desire of your heart, so you said, I remember distinctly, but you came off with me instead, because, to your disgust, you weren't a widow! Really, you women——"

"In a fit of rage it was, yes!" She drew a blade of grass through her teeth, harshly, and again. . . .

"Well, then, be reasonable! Now that you are a widow, why has the desire passed? You could now do all you proposed then, and more!"

"I've done a good deal," she said sagely. "What I wanted most was to get out of the suburbs. I've done that, any way."

"Yes, Angernoune's a fairly opposite district. But it isn't America."

"America was only to marry. I don't want to marry—now."

"I can't understand anybody wanting to, who's once been through it, and had an experience such as you've had. You chose wrong."

"We all do. It's good for character. You'll be twice as nice and understanding when you've made your little mistake too."

"Dash it all, Betsey, must you keep on rubbing it in like this? What's come to you? Continually throwing cold water. It gets on a fellow's nerves, at last, especially when he has very serious doubts himself of the propriety of the step he is taking."

"Then why do you do it?"

"There you are again!"

"I'm sorry."

He half rose. . . . "Well, I don't pretend to understand women!"

She looked up at him. "Yes, it *would* be pretending."

"I leave such special knowledge to novelists like Lee-Brice, whose business it is."

"Are you jealous of him?" she asked combatively.

"With you I am. Not with Dobrée. That is the wrong way round, of course."

Betsey could not, nor would not say anything. Sexual obstinacy possessed her merely.

"I wish I *were* jealous of her. It would argue better for my future happiness. The funny thing about Dobrée is that she doesn't seem a woman at all—to me. Lee-Brice finds her a highly problematical, feminine study. To me she's a pretty little dodo, soon to be extinct. I can't entertain the idea of her womanliness for a single moment! It's pathetic."

"It's not pathetic so much as wrong."

His sweet monitory smile reminded Betsey that she had fallen into preaching again. He continued: "But strangely enough, to the chap who writes indecent novels, all about that sort of thing, novels positively weltering with sex, as Lady Maude says, she seems to appeal? He's always talking of her—quite respectfully you know, I couldn't find anything to take hold of or resent as the girl's fiancé, even if I wanted to. I don't—I like to hear her appreciated, poor little thing! Good Lord, I wonder what's the matter with it all! I can't get the hang of it. Can you?"

He flung himself, face downwards, in the sand. Betsey braced her backbone and sat up stiffly, looking out to sea, with the sad resigned expression of one of the homeless on a bench in the Park, beside a possibly brutish, sleeping partner. She had the hang of it, right enough. Her head scooped the hard cold grains of sand beside her, she drove them into her nails; she felt them going in—a slight counter irritant. At last he sat up, and pushed the neat dark hair, just greying slightly at the temples, back from his forehead.

"Fact is, Betsey, these are not my sort. I'm only just one remove from a working man—and I'm not ashamed of it."

"They all say that, some time," said she. "It's a platform platitude."

"Don't tease! I've been well educated, been abroad, know five languages, got good natural parts. Have you noticed, Betsey, what a vast flight there is of young fledglings like me growing up!"

"I've never seen anybody like you!"

"You flatter!" he said, smiling. "Heaps of us. These modern conditions produce us naturally, and will, more and more of us. I know what we're like, well enough. Men, you'll never think, soon, of wondering whether they're gentlemen or no. It's immaterial. The breed's here, come to stay. The new pattern. They're just the good piece of mental machinery slipped into a fairly decent reach-me-down of a body. They

come bouncing out of shops, out of schools, out of classes, anywhere they can hear and learn things. Then they go about their different businesses, they travel in this or that, guns, electricity, anything you like. They glide about and slide in and fit into all sorts of places, but they know no Greek or Latin, and they offer to relieve a lady of her cup, and they generally can't dance—like me. I'm awfully out of it o' nights here. We—I mean they—dressed up last night and danced. Tommy rot, *I* think."

"That's only because you can't dance! But I won't admit you're just the same as the man who comes about the gas or the electricity!" said she, wilfully misunderstanding. "You'll tell me next you've worked in a mine."

"'Strewth!' I have. We all have to begin from the beginning, at Hinterland, if we want to make a job of it. I tell you, I did my day's shift and so on, underground, like any one else for a year on end. When I told Dobrée she wouldn't believe me, poor little kid!"

"Kid! She's taller than you!"

"Kid to me, all the same! . . ." he groaned. "Oh, good Lord, how I wish this house-party was over. I let myself in for it out of vanity, and I'm well paid out. It doesn't go the least bit in the world."

"Not in your idea. I daresay it's the usual thing in her set? Different sets, different ideas."

"I have no set. I wish you wouldn't keep rubbing it in—and any way, she's far too young and selfish to entertain."

"She'll get on better in London."

"I sincerely hope so. If it's going to be anything like this when we are married, and she asks the members of the Cabinet to dinner, I don't know what I'm marrying her for? And if these are her highly extolled friends——"

"They're the usual smart dull London people, aren't they?"

"Yes, very smart—men without livers and women without stomachs—or hearts, either. To see them going down to the beach o' mornings flattened out in skin-tight dresses that peel off them like bananas, or paddling about villages, in the afternoons, shrieking for the tea that isn't, in motor-coats which make them look for all the world like hedgehogs, that a gipsy would bake until the skin stayed behind in the ashes! They treat a mediæval castle as if it was a Surrey mansion, and they seem to have brought all the airs of Hindhead and the graces of Haslemere with them. . . . This blessed afternoon we're all going to bore ourselves at a garden-party at Castle de Saye. The Duchess

of Lax is Dobrée's aunt—gives me three fingers, and wishes I wasn't going to enter her family. The Ladies Ninian, Dobrée's cousins, show the elastic of their hats and curl up their noses when they hear of Suffragettes!"

"Not smart, but good, eh?"

"It's the sort that keeps the old feudal fetish going. The Lady Maudes and such-like are pulling it down, I can see that."

"Possibly. Well, don't be shocked, but Lady Dobrée's maid has invited Ada and Billy and me to come round when you are gone, and be shown the Dwelling House. I said I would. My position here is already so irregular that a few chips off it won't matter. We shall dress in our best, you know, to show the solemnity of the occasion, and put on our hats and our gloves to cross the courtyard!"

"And have tea in the servants' hall. You, my Betsey? I don't quite like that."

"Frankly, I don't think there is so much to choose between the two sets. We call all the maids by their mistresses' names, and they behave much better than their namesakes, for they daren't degrade their titles! You've taste, but we've morals. And manners. We don't stick acid drops in the men's beds, and throw our bread about, and comb men's hair with table-forks, and try to put dormice into the tea-pot."

"Oh, you heard about that, did you? That was Dobrée's quiet fun. She's always teasing little Vallance. He's a twentieth cousin. They're all related all over the place. Well, I daresay you'll have a better time than I shall. Old Brookie—see that you get old Brookie—is quite a character."

XXX

The courtyard for half an hour before three o'clock that day was a pandemonium. Yelping dogs, chattering women, snorting, unruly motors chafing to be gone. By a quarter past three it was clear and empty, and the Keep, as usual, frowned over the absurd level grass-plot with its eight croquet hoops and the sweep of carefully tended yellow gravel that stretched between the two buildings.

Betsey, and Ada with the little Wilfrid—the two latter as deeply in mourning as they dared to be—crossed it, and holding the child up, helped him to ring the electric bell of the Dwelling House, a privilege coveted long and, by the circumstances of the case, of unfrequent attainment. Mr. Brooks opened the door, and his priest-like countenance, wreathed with unaccustomed smiles,

welcomed the Lady of the Keep and her pale unconsidered shadow. They were led ceremoniously into the housekeeper's room, where Miss Parker received them. The housekeeper, a busy woman, was in and out, but Brooks, an amateur of female beauty, sat tight, and tried to entertain Betsey.

"Did you happen to see to-day's paper, Mrs. Adamson?" he asked.

"No, why?"

"Only our Mr. Veere's case is coming on at last."

"And he'll get it, of course," said she.

"Oh, certainly, there's not a shadow of doubt. Waste of time and money on their part. Of course, *we* don't have to think of that! Still I don't like Mr. Veere to be troubled. Not that there's anything in the young man's claim—a regular adventurer, this Ernest Louis seems to be. I knew the lady—the one that was his mother! Of course she was his mother right enough—but we all know what Sir Joris was, bless him!"

"Don't you go blaming Sir Joris, Mr. Brooks," put in the housekeeper. "He was the nicest man I ever knew."

"He could be that and all the rest too—" began Mr. Brooks and stopped. "But there are ladies present!"

"Oh, go on, Mr. Brooks, do! We're all married women here, except me," broke in Miss Parker. "And I'm Lady Dobrée's maid. In Bohemia—Upper Bohemia, she calls it——"

"What's that? Sounds like a street," said Mrs. Cox.

"Name for do as you please, go as you please, and when you please—and wear an old coat," said Miss Parker. "And but that Chaytor's away, she could tell you things——"

"We won't speak ill of the absent," said Mr. Brooks. Chaytor was Lady Maude's maid, and stood for her and her vices, and went by her name, officially. She was in bed now with a bad cold caught at her last visit, a cold house where low dress in the servants' hall was unfortunately *de rigueur*. Parker with sturdy kitchen morality took up the cudgels for the absent.

"Lady Maude's not quite particular enough, but she's got a kind heart all the same. She stayed a day longer at Pillingham just to give Chaytor a chance of getting over her cold. She always lets Chaytor come and attend to her all ready dressed for supper, so long as the girl sticks a golf-cape over her evening frock. Pillingham's a mortal cold house, and so stiff. This house is colder, but more 'laissy ally.' How do you find it is the Keep for cold, Mrs. Cox?"

"Very cold," said Ada. "But it suits my son, and that's all

I think of now since my poor husband's death. I don't wear crape, for the sea-air stickys it so, but——"

Betsey quickly asked Miss Parker to show them over the Dwelling House. That lady acceded joyfully, and took all the rooms one by one, till they came to the only one that interested Betsey—Lady Dobrée's.

It was as vast, as spacious as a drawing-room, with light modern Louis Quinze furniture dotted about on a fair rose-strewn Aubusson carpet. On little lace-covered tables were spread poor Dobrée's meagre effects. Her cotton dressing-jacket, trimmed with cheap lace, was flung on a silk table-cover, edged with real Valenciennes. Her worn bedroom slippers made an ugly blot on the pink carpet. Yes, she wanted money badly!

"It's the best room. Mr. Veere wanted her to have it. Lord and Lady Blessington haven't one half so good. It's the one him and her 'll occupy one day, I suppose!"

Betsey quivered. Then, daringly, she said, "You don't seem very keen on it, Miss Parker?"

"No, he's not her sort, really, not the sort she's been used to. It's just a fancy of hers, that's what this is. And he took her on the hop. Girls are like that. They don't think. He's a nobody, of course, wants her title, and if he loses his money, he'll be nothing at all. I'd rather see her married to the writing gentleman—he's some family, I'll be bound, for all he writes for a living! I'm never deceived. I see so many people. He's with her a good deal, and Mr. Veere either don't know—or he don't care? . . . He's teaching my lady to write a novel, too. She sits up here half the night scribbling—I have to take the ink away before I can get her to bed—and then what she's done she shows him in the day. She's mad on novel-writing, just as she was when cycling came in first."

"How silly!" said Betsey, whose heart leapt. She sneaked up to a photograph of Ernest propped up against a row of Lee-Brice's books. The careless juxtaposition struck her. She liked it, as she liked everything that seemed to point to an understanding between these two in which her own lover did not share. Ernest was being left out in the cold. Every one conspired to put him back in his proper place beside her. He deserved it for aspiring, if it *was* aspiring? Lady Dobrée's world and his were different, and hers not necessarily better? They were a mediæval tag, a stupid feudal remnant clinging to the ancient fetich that was their reason of existence. Let them draw closer and expire within their borders, instead of feebly seeking to

revive what was truly moribund by these occasional infusions of clever common blood!

She loved every drop of it. She bent forward when no one was looking, and kissed the photograph of Ernest. It lurched and fell down behind the chest of drawers.

"Oh, silly, see what I've done!" she cried, and stooping low, retrieved it.

XXXI

They all came home late for dinner, having crossed the Carter Fell, run out of petrol at Edlingham, and burst a tyre at Rothbury. Because they were all worn out, they elected to dance after dinner. Little Lord Vallance, who had driven the second car, volunteered to play for them as long as he could sit on a music-stool.

Ernest Veere wished heartily they would not choose this form of exercise, for though he was graceful and limber he could not dance. The sulkiness of the male wall-plant was his, though he did not allow his vexation to be seen. He stood lonely in the big hall at the end of the drawing-room that served as a ballroom for these absurd people, who seemed to be enjoying themselves hugely, while he, the host, felt like the meanest unaccounted guest in a London crush.

Idly he visited each one of the square *encoignures*, cut in the thickness of the wall, with a single window, that looked sheer down six hundred feet of castle rock. Green silk curtains shut off, if need were, all these little "sitting-out" places. The hall had been designed for dancing. Royalty should have been entertained there, if Sir Joris Veere had not been cut off untimely by Betsey's husband.

Veere thought of this—he was in the mood for gloomy antithesis. He drew the curtains of one of the spaces and shutting himself off from men, opened the window and looked out into the mild August night. Far below he saw the twinkling lights of Angernoune, and in the middle of the plot of trees that formed the village green, a centre of gleaming merriment. The Fair had come, and the horses had been set up and were going round and round in a wheel of glittering spokes. The discordant notes of the hurdy-gurdy that turned music and horses both, came to his ears faintly, with its all too familiar tang.

"*Oh, my little dar-ling, I love you!*" The notes of the three last words came strongly staccatoed. He pictured it. Pairs of village love-birds were even now going round and round

on the nicely balanced, painted, wooden horses, two and two, an ever-renewed procession. Then the end of the tune would be ground out and giddiness at the dismounting would take them, and She would sway and swirl dizzily into His arms, with passionate "Ow's" and "Ha's." The same thing was going on inside at his back. He knew if he looked round he would see Lady Maude and her old flirt Blessington apologising to each other for the time it was since they had danced. There would be Lady Blessington and the man she had brought, that no one knew anything about, except that he amused her and that Lord Blessington tolerated him. There would be Lady Dobrée with Lee-Brice, who danced in the Viennese fashion which Veere disliked so much, for it was excessive. The male dancer made a point of at once taking his partner off her feet, her useless feet, that he seldom allowed her so much as to touch the ground with. What need? She lay, slightly tilted forward, on his breast, as he bore her safely, irresponsibly, through the *mêlée*. Warm-blooded women—or their husbands for them—hardly dared trust themselves with him; his dancer and he were one, and hardly need she lift her head from its pose on his shoulder. Had she done so indeed, her emotions, so easily raised, would have received the cold douche of his unmoved face and wary eyes, gauging distances, plumbing horizons, steering for all he was worth and no sharer of the divine frenzy he was inculcating in his helpless partner.

"After all, it's only an exercise!" was Veere's short-sighted comment on the art, as he turned back to night thoughts and the open window. He looked out and down again. A wide macadamised track led in a sweeping but gradual curve down, down, from the South Gate and the drawbridge to the village. Veere noticed a figure on a bicycle coasting down the slope! . . .

Betsey! The new-made widow. The tom-boy. She was hardy and capable as he knew, but still he didn't quite like her taking that steep curve so carelessly! There was no use in shouting, but he did shout.

"What are you shouting at?" said the harsh voice of Lady Dobrée, coming up behind him, and drawing back the curtain of his shelter. "Brr! Window's open. But I don't mind. I rather like feeling the wind on my neck!"

He turned, quite savagely, and glared at this famous neck that enjoyed the cold air so keenly. The irrelevant perfunctory display of naked flesh outraged the would-be claustral prejudices he shared with every man. Perhaps it was because he had never seen Betsey's neck bare below her collar-bone? Perhaps it was

the insensate, Jura-like tone of the young girl's skin, suggesting, as it did, a lifeless chastity, an arrogant unearned increment of purity. Some women's appeal is conscious, but the direction of her dressmaker's scissors alone regulated the surrender of personality implied in the cut of Lady Dobrée's gown. Right! It was right it should be so. What was he thinking of? She was only a girl. His soul, in the tide of cruel sexual criticism, paused and pitied her—and himself too. He was to make her a woman. With a groan he turned to the window again and closed the casement with savage vigour, lest he were tempted to throw himself down.

Where had Betsey gone at this hour, speeding, like Britomart, under her panoply of rough serge, buttoned to the chin, and little tight helmet-like cap that took all her hair in? She made so little of her hair here, good Betsey, for prudence' sake, only letting it out of prison sometimes, when far out on the rocks, or in Kymarays Bay, it was not Veere, but Lee-Brice who was with her.

Why not? She was free. She liked men. She liked life. She was probably gone down to see one of its phases now at the fair, in the company of the four Vicarage boys, who all adored her. So did their father. He was a widower. She might marry him—she was quite good and pure. He was a free-thinker, and could easily get over the fact of her being the widow of a murderer, if she, on the other hand, could make up her mind to endure his Jaeger shirts and woollen knitted stockings and nut diet?

Not she! He was not afraid of her doing that. . . .

"Are you alone?"

A voice broke in on his comparative solitude. It was Dobrée, again, trying to be arch. She drew the curtain back. The ballroom was deserted. They had all gone to comfort Lord Vallance, who for sheer fatigue of having driven them all day had now, as he had threatened, fallen off the music-stool. The curtain flapped to behind her. Veere closed the window officiously. Though breathless, she did not look hot. Lady Dobrée was proud of that peculiarity of hers—she hated girls that got red after dancing. Veere, on the other hand, liked them to do so, because it was natural.

They were alone. He could have flung his arms round her and kissed her now, ardently, passionately, with perfect social impunity. He might even pretend that she was not his fiancée, if he cared to add a forbidden zest. He saw the little romance-seeking look in her eyes, and realised that at that moment she

desperately longed for the power to force and impel him to such harmless rape.

The moment passed. She said pettishly,

"Why can't you dance? It is such fun!"

"It's about the only thing I can't do," he retorted, nettled. "It's just that I haven't had time to learn. I'm a worker."

"Mr. Lee-Brice can dance—and write books as well."

"Nice books, with a dissected motive on every page, books that prowl about in and rifle people's innards like the hand of the executioner in the old days. One criminal bounced up and hit the man over the head! So I should——"

"How horrid! You haven't an ounce of poetry in you, Ernest, to talk about innards in a ballroom."

"Oh, don't you talk about poetry in a ballroom! There's more down there—" he pointed to the merry-go-round—"and anyhow I didn't know *you* went in for it."

Her voice grew rougher—there was emotion in it. They were still alone—she touched his coat-sleeve.

"That old convention. It hurts me. You've adopted it, but, Ernest, am I so hard? I don't believe I am, really? It is that I am unawakened."

"Has Lee-Brice been telling you so?"

"He said I was a sort of Sleeping Beauty!—Now, you will think I am conceited for telling you that!"

"No, I don't—" He took her hand. "My dear child, you're pretty enough, goodness knows. You know I think so—" He kissed her. "Wake! The woman who wants to get her full share of kisses nowadays must be jolly wideawake, and not afraid of pricking her fingers on the rose-bush of life either."

"How pretty! The rose-bush of life! Ernest!" Again there was the rough note in the voice. "Ernest! I believe if you were to kiss me once—as you probably kiss some other woman——"

"On my honour, I do not."

"I believe you. How stupid of you!"

It was a wrong note. He became bitter again.

"Lady Maude taught you to say things like that."

"No, indeed. I think for myself. I'm waking—not through you. . . . There, now you hate me!"

"My poor Dobrée!" He took her hand, but they were no longer alone. The others were beginning to come back into the ballroom; the pianist had been fortified and replaced on his seat. "I can't kiss you now—here——"

"Come into the morning-room, then. There's no one there!"

He was not so much touched as shocked by this sexual *gaucherie*.

"And do you mean to prove me there—once for all to test the strength of my feeling for you? . . . No, not like that! . . ." He spoke hastily, eagerly, it seemed as if it had to be said. "Dobrée, what's to be done? Are we two to marry?"

She flung away from him, out of the window place, and beckoned to Lee-Brice. On his arm she passed out of the dance, and into the empty morning-room.

"Sweet innocent! she is trying to make me jealous," Veere thought. Sad and depressed beyond measure as he was, he laughed. "But I am *not* jealous!"

Deeply questioning himself, he issued into the circle of light and made himself agreeable to a cousin of Lady Dobrée.

XXXII

The young girl flung herself into an arm-chair. Lee-Brice, who was perfectly *au fait* of what was going on and could make a very good guess as to what was passing in her mind, sat down at a respectful distance. The "cross" he was between Don Quixote and Sir Galahad was never more marked. He was not heated with his previous exertions in the ballroom. His stateliness was unabated. He laid his crush hat with which he never neglected to go unarmed across his knee, and waited till the storm-tossed child of rank should unbosom herself. She looked at him, inquiringly, after a while, and conventionally tore a handkerchief into fragments.

"I suppose you find me a good study?" said she.

"A good deal more than that."

"Well, I don't mind sitting here and giving you tips. A tortured woman's heart——!"

He looked incredulous, but said nothing.

The tears started into her eyes. "You don't believe I've got a heart either, it seems. Or that I'm a woman at all——"

He put up his *pince-nez*.

"Yes. I see you are really suffering as women can suffer! . . . You've got beyond controlling the amount of emotion that can be contained in the average human vessel without spilling."

"I want to tell you how I feel, but it is so difficult. . . .

Only you are so splendid, you understand. . . . I can tell you one thing, being engaged is very poor fun!"

"Quite the tamest of all the social rites! Like confirmation. No, the fun comes after, and the tears too generally."

"I like you to talk to me cynically, as if I was grown up. No one else does. There seems to be a conspiracy to keep me a child, and Ernest Veere, that I'm going to marry, is the worst. One is the principal person, for the moment, to him at any rate, and he doesn't give himself the least trouble to get to understand one. Oh, it's all wrong!—I'm all wrong, I suppose? . . . I look into myself—and . . ."

She walked across the room and looked out of the window giving on to the courtyard. He followed her, his resolution precipitated by the sight of her moral discomfort, touched to see this young girl aping the airs and introspectiveness of the problem-play heroine, deeply cognisant, too, of the true nature of the problem that was agitating these two promised partners for life. Race was struggling with its dislike for slickness, wounded vanity in the woman against self-invited boredom in the man. Then there was Mrs. Altamont!

He was startled by Lady Dobrée's sudden exclamation.

"Why, there's Ernest! Out there! He's got his *pardessus* but no hat on. He's off somewhere. Where is he going?"

The little iron gate at the head of the flight of steps that led down to the gate clicked. She started.

"He's going out of the Castle!"

"To take a turn on the merry-go-round probably?" Lee-Brice turned away from the window. "One only hopes he won't be thrown. A desperate man!—What are you ringing for? Let me!"

"You'll soon see!"

Brooks appeared.

"Tell my maid to come here with my wrap—the dark one."

"What are we going to do?" said the author, his dark eyes glowing.

"We're going to the Fair too, to see that Ernest doesn't fall off. You'll escort me, won't you?"

"To the end of the world, and Angernoune village green. . . . It is mild enough," he murmured to himself. Then aloud, "Hadn't we better take Lady Maude?"

"If you like. But you'll make it far less respectable if you do. Besides, she's in at Bridge."

Lady Dobrée considered the matter to be settled. She was

unused to being contradicted. The maid brought the wrap, and Lee-Brice, wearing a soft hat and with his Spanish hidalgo's cloak thrown over his shoulder, escorted this Elvira to track out her wayward Don Juan.

The coco-nut shies, the fat lady, the shooting galleries, had taken their horses out and nestled under the canopy of tall trees which made of the three-cornered village green a thick mat of foliage as seen from the Castle. Lee-Brice enjoyed to the full the peculiar pleasure which the underlighting of swart green leaves always gave him. To Lady Dobrée, standing beside him, sturdily planted on white satin slippers, while the hem of her close-fitting white frock, which she held tightly and relentlessly round her, transversely bisected the vertical line of her ankles, this Teniers-like scene, with its boors and flaring lights and dark darknesses, represented but a less well-managed Kermesse than she had often seen on the operatic stage. She was, moreover, deeply intent on singling out the man she had come to look for. Now and then she stamped her feet and the thin dried leaves crackled beneath her tread. Lee-Brice realised her state of nervous impatience, but he knew that in the main the young girl had the necessary self-control and power of repose and could bide her time with anybody.

But it was nearly twelve o'clock. Lee-Brice, formal, was getting anxious to take this enterprising lamb back to her magnificent fold. They had as yet seen no sign of Veere. With regard to Betsey, they had no inkling of the right place to look for her. Suddenly, however, their wandering gaze fixed itself on the horses, and then they were both aware of a spirited figure in a short skirt and piquant hat from which masses of gold hair escaped, riding on a red horse with blue trappings.

"There's the Romney!" Lady Dobrée whispered. "He hasn't found her then?"

"She's like a Valkyrie now. Splendid in her way. Did you expect—did you think he had set out to look for her?"

"Those Keep women are the only two women in the place he *could* possibly be interested in, except me," she replied composedly. "And this is the handsomest of the two. When I saw her, I said at once, 'Gold hair has it!'"

"I admire you, do you know?" said the author, with less of premeditation than usual.

"Oh, why?" said she, shrugging her thin shoulders cynically. As the superfine maker of phrases was beginning to be natural, the lady chose to become affected. "I'm only making a marriage

of interest, you know. I rather like Veere—of course—but if he prefers this person——"

"Shall we go then?"

She signified her assent, lifted her skirts higher over her thin legs, regardless of grinning yokels' glances, and moved away. As they reached the outer fringe of the crowd, they met Veere, rushing in wild-eyed, from his long walk in the links.

If the latter had had any doubts as to Dobrée's capability of conducting the affairs of a London reception they were dispelled from that moment. Unruffled, she waved her hand gently in the direction of the group she and her cavalier had just left.

"You'll find Mrs. Adamson—isn't that her name?—in there," she said. "Good night. I'm getting cold."

Doubtless a distinct shift of the kaleidoscope took place in her brain at that moment. She substituted, perhaps unconsciously, the name of one man for another in her mental field of permutations and combination. Yet she did not take the arm of Mr. Lee-Brice, but walked on by his side in silence. She was thinking, with her conscious mind, of what Parker would say to her treatment of her white satin shoes. And he, on his side, was realising that they all had very little excuse for doing as she complained—treating her as a child. It would be futile to do that any more.

They began to mount the incline by the zigzag paths that dissimulated it, and that would finally lead them by a subtle gradient up to the bridge that once spanned a moat. She turned to him. The witching time was getting short. He had much enhanced the sentimental opportunity by not bothering her with talk. Her voice was rougher than ever.

"Mr. Lee-Brice, you saw that woman? What has she got that I haven't, besides a lot of hair?"

"Spots of commonness, any way."

"Yes, but . . . charm seems to neutralise even commonness—it will neutralise anything, it seems. Oh, why was I sent into the world without charm!"

"My dear Lady Dobrée!"

"Lady Dobrée—yes—but with nothing else to recommend her!"

"Good looks! Fine—very fine—character! I mean it."

"I believe you do. But—" She looked away, she was not thinking of her neighbour—"I'd adore any one who could persuade me that I had one little tiny iota of the other thing. It's something small and wonderful, like radium—a tiny speck of it can modify a whole continent. It's the one bit that'll be left,

when the planets burn up, and it's the only thing that survives a woman's beauty and everything else!"

He caught her hand.

"Are you trying to show me I've got enough radium to make you want to squeeze my hand? . . ." she said gently. Her manner was innocent of insinuation, simple, natural as of a pupil to a trusted schoolmaster. The most sanguine of men could not have presumed on it. Lee-Brice, who knew women——knew better than to do so. He gently dropped the hand he held as they stood at the gate and summoned the sleepy porter to let them in.

Though the young girl felt that she had definitely shown this man her heart, and the trend of her hopes and wishes, it did not occur to her to behave as if there were any understanding—any secret between them. When, in the solemn courtyard, that slept under the moonlight, they came upon Lady Maude, she told that lady where she had been, and rallied her and her companion, Lord Vallance, in a voice from which she made no effort to remove the traces of emotion.

"Lord Vallance asked me to come out and shame the moon with him!" Lady Maude explained. "The caprices of a nice boy are law to me, as you know——"

"So you arranged a dreamy scarf over your head, and came. Suppose you take my man, and I'll have yours."

"All right! You've been crying?"

"Yes. Now, scatter!"

"Do you know," said Lady Maude to the author as they walked away together, "I accepted this invitation to Angernoune solely on your account. I thought we would have such nice long indecent talks together, and instead of that, you are spending your time riding on roundabouts at village fairs with Ernest Veere's little sweetheart."

"She's such a dear," replied Lee-Brice. "Shall I tell you the flower she reminds me of? A little early crocus, sturdy, smooth, straight out of the ground, without guile or subterfuge or moral trimmings of any kind, pretty nearly curveless, except for a little bit of modest closing in at the top——"

"I don't know about closing in? She says the most awfully *risqué* things sometimes, and her dresses are somehow always lower, and higher held up, than any one else's."

"The indelicacy of extreme innocence. She's only a child, in spite of her class-arrogance and outspokenness, feeling her way in a labyrinth of sophistications and perversities set up for her by the middle-class people, who complicate life

because it's a fight to them. Rank is, or ought to be, primitive and simple because there is no severe struggle for existence to breed diversities and complexities of character——"

"How you do run on!" said Lady Maude. "A woman is always complicated, even if she lives in a glass house! Oh, you authors, you can analyse where you love!" A shy glance in his direction. "Now we'll turn in. I'm a good sort, I can talk about another woman for half an hour without turning a hair—of my wig. But no more!"

XXXIII

Ernest Veere, inwardly dazed and stupid with unusual introspection, outwardly plastered with customary calm, made his way into the thick of the throng, until he stood side by side with the moving circle of the merry-go-round. He caught sight of the Vicarage boys—and then of their cherished companion, Mrs. Altamont. She was actually mounted on a horse—riding abreast, with one great grey-flannelled hobbledehoy who punctuated, with the raucous sounds of a young voice pitched at breaking-point, their circular confined progress. She was on the outside.

"Betsey!" said Veere as she passed. Even then, he saw that she looked sad. Sad unto tears, with her golden hair coming down in floods under her cap, and riding a patient roan horse with blue and crimson trappings. She did not hear him as she pursued her Valkyrie-like course and curved rapidly away from him.

Next time she came round he was determined to make her hear at the risk of seeing her fall off with emotion.

"Betsey!" he said again as she passed.

Her eyes fell on him. They were shining and full of reproach. He saw the shell-like whites of them as she looked over her shoulder.

"Come and have a ride!" she shouted, her face suddenly instinct with tragic animation.

A great guffaw from the Vicarage boy, too simple to notice that Mr. Veere had called his companion by her Christian name!

She passed again. Veere felt as if a part of him was borne in the remorseless curve along with this queer piece of female flesh and blood, who did not belong to him, but who alone had the power to make him feel angry. Such a fallacious escort to choose for what could have been taken as a fashionable freak, skilfully managed—great rough boys with voices cracking all over the place! Her want of taste revolted him.

The wheel stopped. He found Betsey at his side; submissively tucking her hair out of sight.

"Don't trouble to hide it. . . . It's in character. That is if you have any left!"

"Do mind your own business, Ernest. . . . I never did have any. You've always thought I did very well without it. I don't belong to the ranks of the chaperoned."

"Still you might find a smarter escort."

"To sit crying beside—? No, I like the Vicarage boys; they notice nothing."

"What is there to notice? You've no dignity!"

"No," she said sadly. "Not now. Something—lady-like has snapped. I've lost hold of myself. What matter, especially to you? And I can't help thinking that I manage to keep respectable as well as your Lady Dobrée, who's been down here with Lee-Brice in white satin, and her neck bare for every yokel to stare at!"

"She dresses every evening, you see. And please don't abuse her to me. You lose ground."

"I don't care to gain any," said she gloomily. "How should I? The die is cast—your die—and yet you're scolding me as if I was your wife—as if we were Darby and Joan! . . . I'm having a fairly good time, and I don't see why you, who are nothing to me, by your own choice, should come here and prate about dignity and make me self-conscious, all for no good! I'm not Mrs. Veere, and never shall be, so why shouldn't I ride twenty hobby-horses if I like? I'm Mrs. Adamson—common, second-rate Mrs. Adamson—who shows the Castle for sixpence to you and your real friends, that understand you and love you, and think you're a right good sort, if a little bounderish! Let me go. . . . I wish I was as perfectly indifferent to you as I try to batter myself into being; but you know I'm not, and I know you're not, and it's been Hell. . . . Let me go! It's a pity we understand each other so well, isn't it?"

He caught her hand.

"You demon! And all you say is true . . . Betsey! . . ."

"Good-bye, Ernest. Let me go . . . please . . . I love you!"

She was gone, swallowed up in the crowd, her last whisper only half heard, half believed. . . .

* * * * *

"What is it? You sent for me?"

Lady Dobrée de Saye, very red, in a white kimono, stood at

the door of her room that night, and confronted Veere. She held out a handkerchief.

"What's the matter?" He looked at it. "Some one had hæmorrhage?"

"No. I bit my lip, and I happened to have it in my hand. It isn't mine." She held out a corner of it. She had regained her calm.

"Well, you are a most original woman!"

"Read the name."

"E. Altamont," he said crossly.

"I found it in my room behind a chest of drawers. Parker thinks it must belong to a friend of hers whom she had in here. Only, that *her* name was Adamson."

"Mrs. Adamson in the Keep?"

"Mrs. Altamont in the Keep."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Altamont, or Adamson, it appears to be hers. Give it back to her."

"I will."

"Very well, do so, in the morning. Go to bed, now, quietly. Good night. I suppose I mustn't kiss you before Parker."

"That's just why you must," said she capriciously.

The embrace was given and received. "May I really go and see her to-morrow?" she whispered.

"As you like."

"Shall you go across to-night and warn her?"

"No, I shall go straight to bed. You can watch me go if you like. I'm sick of it all, and I'll just leave it to Betsey to straighten it out."

"Betsey?"

"Yes, Betsey, that's her name. It's the golden-haired one. Don't make a mistake and claw Mrs. Cox's eyes out. Good night! You won't see me in the morning."

"Why not?"

"I'm off to town, to watch my case. First day to-morrow."

"Oh, poor Ernest——!"

"Keep your pity," said he crossly, turning and seeking his own room.

"Most original engaged couple I ever saw!" thought Lady Maude Erskine-Robertson, who, in a gorgeous flowered French *peignoir* that invited more instant recognition, watched the colloquy from her open bedroom door three or four steps up from Lady Dobrée's. Miss Parker did not abandon her post of observation. Three scared women's faces watched Veere as he flung away.

XXXIV

The beach at Angernoune was dotted in the summer months with bathing-tents and cosy corners, but there was no pier, no bathing-machines as yet. It ranked so far only as an amateur watering-place. Very little shipping came within eye range, except the Scotch steamers that coasted by on their way from London to Leith. There were quicksands, crabs that bit and jelly-fish that stung, and other obstructions that are not met with at Margate.

Still, Evangeline Simmons, on the look-out for a seaside resort wherein to spend a month with her friend Mrs. Wormeley, had nosed it out. Evangeline loved the picturesque and the romantic, and Angernoune Castle, as every one knew, belonged to Ernest Veere, Betsey Altamont's friend. That added a zest to the Wimbledonian plans. She thought she would like to see how the Fairy Prince in the cave was getting on. Meanwhile, the air at Angernoune was good, the sands golden, and the lodgings, though amateurish, not worse than other lodgings where they take you in, and pack themselves and a large family into the kitchen for the summer months.

Mrs. Wormeley and Evangeline had brought a large striped Christy Minstrel canvas shelter, set it up on the beach under the lee of the Castle, and sat in it every day when it was fine. They brought their lunch in baskets, and a novel each, and to-day's *Sweep* and a Book for the Bairn, *i.e.*, Master Albany, who had never screamed or run away from his nurse since the day he received that terribly converting shock of the lady with the long bead necklace coming into his nursery. It would be too much to say he never smiled again, but he certainly never screamed. His mother, when she saw the card in the hall, had suddenly realised that the bead chain was composed of rose diamonds and that their angel visitant was a member of the aristocracy. Her distinguished card still lay in the china tray, dusted and delicately handled, but never covered. The memory of the Lady Dobrée de Saye was kept green. She *had* once called!

Mrs. Wormeley, in the intervals of making purple French knots in her gold embroidered night-gown case, looked up at the Castle. It impressed her deeply, with all the weight of the grandiose.

"It's a castle and a half, isn't it?" Thus did she render in colloquial English the effect produced on her by the

imposing appearance of the great Norman stronghold of the North.

"Ernest may lose it?" said Evangeline glumly. "The trial is going on now. That pretender man seems to stick at nothing. I saw something about it in the paper to-day. He seems to have been tampering with the entry of his mother's marriage certificate in some little local church in the South of France."

"Why should he trouble to alter the certificate of his mother's marriage to Sir Joris?"

"Silly! It wasn't the certificate of the Veere marriage—I don't know where *that* is—but another. Don't you see, if she married a Frenchman, as they say she did in between whiles, she can't have been legally married to Sir Joris, even if they do find that certificate. Here, let's look it up——"

She rummaged in her frightful canvas bag, embroidered on some previous holiday, and found *The Sweep*.

"See! *He* didn't tamper with the register, that's proved—but some one else did—in his interests. They arrested that man and now they've arrested another, and he turns out to be the plaintiff's cousin."

"That sounds fishy?"

"The plaintiff—his name is Ernest Louis—says it was done by some one in the defendant's interests. The defendant's *our* Ernest Rose, see? If Ernest Louis—that's the plaintiff—is found to be illegitimate, then Ernest Rose, up there," she waved her hand in the direction of the castle, "keeps it as the nephew of Sir Joris. See?"

"No. I don't see. You're not very plain and I'm rather muddled. I never can remember the difference between plaintiff and defendant. You're a novelist, so of course it comes easier."

"And you're a solicitor's wife!"

"Ah, but Mortimer never talks business to me. He says it's degrading. He likes to keep all that apart from the home."

Evangeline laid *The Sweep* down in the sand with a sigh of satisfaction and resumed the silk tie she was knitting for Dr. Gedge. "I think we writing-women should not neglect the arts of peace,' she always said. But she could talk and work too.

'A nervous business for our friend—Betsey's friend, I mean. He's in London now, I suppose, watching his own case. Mrs. Gray said she thought he wasn't in the Castle just now. The flag's down, any way."

"Oh, but there are a lot of people there still. By the way, didn't Mrs. Gray say there was a man in Lady Dobrée's house-

party that the Vicar preached about last Sunday—the shame of his book being suppressed, don't you know? Did he mean *The Red Corpuscles?* Can it be the man who wrote *The Red Corpuscles?*"

"Not likely. Surely the Castle people wouldn't know any one whose books had been suppressed, though the Vicar might. He's a bit advanced, they say. I don't like it in a clergyman, I must say. The Jaeger Vicar, so far, is the only thing I've got against this place."

"I don't know that I mind. It's rather smart to be a free-thinker. It's dowdy to be as thin-skinned as Mortimer, and bother so about morals! And as for Lady Dobrée and her set, I know something of them. She treats authors and so on as she would conjurors and palmists, don't you know, and when it's a general mourning announced, don't a bit mind their coming to her parties wearing colours! I heard that once. It's rather derogatory to the profession, I think. We ought to be careful to be more conventional than most. Oh, I expect Lee-Brice is *The Red Corpuscles* all right."

"That book always makes me think of Betsey."

"Yes, it does me. You know we were in Wellingtons asking for it when the murder of Sir Joris first came out. She was the *calmest* thing, that day!"

"Stunned, probably. So Dr. Gedge always says. By the way, she'd be a widow now, wouldn't she?"

"Ten days ago. I expect she's gone to America. She told me she meant to that day I went to tea with her in Worksop House. I was the only one of her old friends she would see during that awful time——"

"She only saw you once," said Mrs. Wormeley hastily. "And that was an accident—or more than an accident—so you needn't brag about it. . . . My goodness!"

"What is it?"

"Speak of the—! I'm very much mistaken, or I do believe that is Betsey over there, coming straight towards us! And isn't that her cook's little boy she's got in her hand?"

"It is! Now wasn't I right to get you to come here?"

"We'll have to speak to her!" ejaculated Mrs. Wormeley, becoming very business-like. "Albany, come here. Now mind, you're not to want to go and play with that little boy, over there, do you see?"

"Oh, mar, can't I?" begged Master Albany, naturally affected by this prohibition.

Mrs. Wormeley encircled her son's neck with her arm, bury-

ing his face in the arm of her jacket. Betsey, short-sightedly plodding towards them—they were in the direct line of the road to the beach—was upon them before she could take thought to avoid the suburban snare set for her.

"Heigh, Betsey!" exclaimed Evangeline, bluntly and shyly. "You're not going to cut me, surely? Shake hands with Mrs. Wormeley—let bygones be bygones?"

"They *are* bygones, aren't they?" said Betsey, gently indicating a deep sense of time elapsed. "No, I don't mind shaking hands—twenty hands, if you like."

Master Albany and Billy, at a good working distance, glared and gloated at each other.

"You've got thinner, Betsey," said Mrs. Wormeley, who had got fatter.

"Have I?"

"And it's not because you're in black!" she insinuated disapprovingly.

"I don't believe in mourning," said Betsey, "even if you're sorry the person has died. I'm not. Can't these two children go and play together?"

"Certainly, if you'll sit down and tell us all about yourself," said Mrs. Wormeley, quite cordially—Betsey always had a way with her. "Not out of sight, mind!" she admonished her child, who was being led away to recondite groves of bent-grass by the sturdier, more spirited, Billy.

"And how do you come to be here?" she asked judicially, as the married woman, taking the entire conduct of the interview. "Aren't you going to tell us all about it?"

"I'm going to tell you all that you can possibly find out," said Betsey. "Bother you! Well, you must know—you *will* know—I come to be here just as you come to be here. Angernoune is reckoned to be very good air, and I have taken lodgings with my cook. She happens to have got the post of housekeeper at the Castle. She'll be the one to show you over the Keep on Thursday!"

"We intended to come," murmured Evangeline.

"You'll be sure to come now, won't you?" the other said sarcastically. "Remember that I call myself Adamson. That *is* my name, really. I suppose it is no use asking you both not to split on me in the village—for if you do I shall have to go, and I'd be sorry, for the place suits me."

"My *dear*, we wouldn't give you away for the world, would we Evangeline? Naturally, it's a bit awkward for you—the association—the name Altamont. How funny it sounds to pro-

nounce it again! It gives one quite a turn! So much has happened since then——"

"We won't discuss it. In fact, I'm off. Billy has to have his bathe."

"You *are* good to those children, Betsey! You always were. And Mr. Veere—I used to hear he made quite pets of them! There was a little girl, wasn't there? How's she?"

"All right. She died."

"How can she be all right, then, Betsey? But I suppose you've had a lot of worry, and you're a bit muddled in your mind at times."

Betsey rose to her feet.

"Then are you going to America?" Mrs. Wormeley inquired.

"No. Who said I was?"

Miss Simmons broke in. "That last interview we had——"

"When you got into my house on the sly and hid in my bedroom! Oh yes, I had some idea of it then. Now I've changed my plans."

"Where *are* you going then?" Mrs. Wormeley reserved her rightful retributive chaff of Evangeline till later. "Can one know?"

"I'll send you a card to say where I am when I'm settled, and then you can have the pleasure of calling—or taking no notice of it. Just which suits you. Good-bye."

"The same as ever!" said Mrs. Wormeley, after Betsey's pretty maidenly back was turned.

"More cynical—and less handsome!" said the other.

"Oh, she was always quite the rudest woman in Wimbledon. We only tolerated her because she was so amusing—and now she isn't even that! Soured! Not so much hair! I wonder, now, I really do, what she has been doing with herself all this time since she left Wimbledon?"

"Running about, under an assumed name. And here, in Mr. Veere's house, practically. Her old flame! And he's in and out all day, I expect. There's an underground passage between the Dwelling House and the Keep!"

"Which he uses, you bet!"

"Oh, this *is* a good place to come to!" sighed Evangeline. "One gets talked out of oneself with a vengeance, doesn't one? It's as good as any rest-cure to me—to be in the move—in the know. We'll go over the Castle on Thursday, won't we?"

"If she's still there! She'll probably do a bolt—isn't that what she would call it?" Mrs. Wormeley was staring towards a lonely figure of a woman who had been sitting on the

beach and who, when Betsey passed her, had risen, tentatively, and sat down again as if she had repented her impulse to speak to Mrs. Altamont.

"What are you looking at so hard, and not attending to me?" asked Evangeline.

"I was thinking how true it was that you said about this being the place to come to. Do you see that girl over there—nicely dressed—good style?"

"She's been there ages. There was a man with her a few moments ago."

"Well, when she first got up to speak to Betsey as she passed, and thought better of it, I noticed her more particularly, and I feel sure it's that Lady Dobrée. When she came in that day about Albany screaming so, Betsey said I was a muff for not improving the acquaintance. I'm going to do it now! I'm going to speak to her. Lady Dobrée de Saye—that's the name on the card she left on me."

"All right. I'm on."

Taking Albany by the dirty hand and followed by Evangeline, Mrs. Wormeley approached the negligent figure and dashed at it.

"Lady Dobrée, perhaps you may not remember me, but this is the little boy you took such an interest in, once, in Wimbledon."

"Did I?" said Lady Dobrée coldly.

"Don't you remember? You were walking up our road in Wimbledon—at least I don't know if you were walking—and you caught sight of Albany, in one of his naughty little tempers. He was having a fine escapade—he's such a highly nervous child—and you saw him running down the road with no clothes on, and called in about it. You're too old now, my sweet, to do that! Speak to the lady and tell her so."

She removed a sticky bun—what she could of it—from her son's mouth, and continued:

"We've got such nice lodgings—Mrs. Gray's—very clean and reasonable. You're in the Castle, of course. We heard. Our landlady knows all about Mr. Veere's house-party. A friend of mine—that lady who's just left us—you must have seen her go past—is in lodgings there, and likes it very much."

"Oh, in the Keep!" A light broke on Lady Dobrée's face, stiffly made up to repress impertinence. She half rose, and forgetting to be distant, asked eagerly:

"Could you tell me her right name—the name of the one with gold hair—not the dark-haired one."

"Not so golden as it was!" said Mrs. Wormeley. "But still, Lady Dobrée, if you're really interested in poor Betsey—I

think we'll tell her, won't we, Evangeline? She's got such a very sad life, and Lady Dobrée is interested in her."

A pause.

"She's the widow of Altamont, the murderer!"

"Is she really? No, I'm not particularly interested in her, thank you. Good day!"

She did not rise, she did not move from her place, she merely turned her back. And Judas lost his thirty pieces.

XXXV

It was midday. Lady Dobrée, returned from her bathe, wandered round and round the courtyard alone, helplessly throwing croquet balls for Boris to retrieve from the square enclosure of the ruined chapel, and again, returning, examining with a faint curiosity the cockle-shells embedded in the wall of the Keep. Mrs. Altamont, had Lady Dobrée but known it, watched her from a window slit inside, sitting cross-legged in the wide stone *encoignure* that widened out to make a seat-hold in the interior. Golden hair against grey wall, she made a picture which Lee-Brice, the only artistic sensorium in the *enceinte* of Angernoune, would have known how to admire.

He sat, calm, at his own window in the Dwelling House by a little table, correcting an important batch of proofs for the next post. If he troubled to raise his eyes, he could see Lady Dobrée's peregrinations, but he was bent on finishing the work in hand methodically and finally. The young lady would not run away.

It was finished, the envelope addressed and stamped. The author rose, and stood in his window full in view. Lady Dobrée, strangely womanly and gentle, came and waited below. She had no notion of flirting; with her, the attainment of her immediate object always precluded side-issues, and she was deeply determined on a certain course—or had been, while she mounted the steep sides up to the postern and through into the domain of Angernoune, after her conversation with the two suburban ladies on the beach.

"Have you quite done?" she asked politely.

"Yes. I will go down and post this, and after that I shall be quite at your service."

"I want nothing doing for me, that another person could do, at least," she replied sadly. "Alone I did it—or alone I don't do it, would be nearer the mark."

"You have been circling for a long while round and round,

like the student Wagner's poodle in *Faust*—but with what objective I cannot guess!"

He joined her on the grass-plot. Dobrée looked up at him and said frankly:

"I look a fool, don't I? The fact is, I want to have a row with a woman, and I don't know how to get at her?"

"Ah! Ring the bell of the Keep."

"How do you know that is the person?"

"I knew you were stalking the Lady of the Keep. I saw her just now, from my window, go into her fastness. She was a little flurried, I thought, and showed it."

"She would. That sort of common person!"

"Is she a common sort of person? I think not! She's one of those women you can't classify, for they come under no known category. It's a class that's bred under modern conditions——"

"Like Ernest Veere!" said she roundly. "Funny! Those two are better pals than you know. I've just found out about her, from a couple of impertinent women I met on the sands this morning. They were friends of hers—of Mrs. Altamont's. You don't seem surprised?"

"I suspicioned it."

"I don't believe you a bit. Being a novelist wouldn't surely put you on to that! Now I had a sort of inkling for I found a handkerchief yesterday marked with her name. Here it is!"

"*Pièce de conviction!*"

"Yes, it only needed, after that, for them to tell me which of the Keep women was Mrs. Altamont!"

"Who's the other then?"

"Her cook!"

"More likely the other woman in the case! . . . a barmaid or a model, wasn't it?"

"I don't know. I didn't take any interest in the Altamont trial, except in so far as it referred to Ernest. The only thing is, that if the Romney's really the woman he used to go about with in town, you know—and that there was such a talk about—Ernest would hardly have dared to encourage me, as he did last night, to go and talk to her about it! . . ."

"Not all things—but a few things are possible to Veere that would not be—say, to us! He flies to bluff, resorts to it as a natural weapon, without reference to the delicacy of the position in which you are placed. And it needed some nerve——"

"Oh, you can't say Ernest is a coward!"

"We'll leave him something!" he smiled. "Well, why

don't you do as he so urgently suggested? Villainy! Seek it out! Have an explanation."

"I can't, somehow."

"Because, somehow, you are gentle, in the true sense of the word."

"I meant to—told him so. But when I came to think it over, I found I had nothing to kick off from. What was I going to say to her, when I did see her? How was I going to couch my complaint? I can't go to her and say, 'Madam, —or woman!—you're a murderer's wife, and I disapprove of your acquaintance with the man I'm going to marry—if I am'!"

His face brightened. He remarked cynically: "That addition would probably take the sting out of your words."

"Why? Oh, I see! And he with her, do you think? I suspected that, too. Oh dear, what dirty water we're swimming in! I saw them once together, and I've been restless and irritable ever since. How could I not be? It was a week ago, and they were sitting in a cleft in the sand-hills about half a mile from here. He was lying on the sand, face downwards, with his back to her like a lover, and she was munching rushes! I felt horrid, and yet I wasn't spying, only walking by. Since then I've hated this place. I wish I was out of it! It's all different—it's a sickening hole, I think. And we're Ernest's guests. . . . Oh, God!"

She sank on to a bit of a stone plinth, lying derelict in the little chapel garden where he had led her without her noticing. "It seems rather mean to be wild because a man you're not in love with is in love with another woman? My vanity is hurt, I suppose?"

"Oh no, it isn't that; it is not vanity, it is proper pride. Ernest Veere hasn't behaved well—he doesn't know how to behave in fact. You are fully entitled to a scene."

He observed her, dropping, conscious and bewildered, unaccustomed to deal with men of this socially doubtful brand. He tested her again, he wished her to come out of the trial perfectly pure and lady-like.

"Come, I say, and talk to her. She's in there, I know, and I believe watching us through one of those loopholes."

Lady Dobrée started, shrugged her shoulders, looked thoroughly disgusted.

"No, it's no good. I simply can't. I'm shy."

XXXVI

The party at Angernoune had been dwindling for some time past. The host was away, autumn stealing on apace. The evenings closed in very cold, with more than a touch of frost. The Dwelling House now tenanted the Blessingtons, Lady Maude Erskine-Robertson, the novelist, and Lady Dobrée only. These five persons attempted to fill beautifully and nightly the long narrow table at the head of which Lady Dobrée had sat from the beginning. The lower end of it, with its melancholy acreage of glistering white table-cloth now seemed very far away from the little knot of people at the top, who were in such complete sympathy and fashionable accord that conversation was hardly needed to foster the sense of fellowship between them.

They were all in a tale. Lee-Brice, happy to be one of them, casually, albeit, fitted in perfectly. No one missed Ernest Veere.

The old butler was severely catechised at every meal, as to the date of his master's probable return. No one but he was privileged to know it.

"I could not say, sir." "I could not tell, my lady," was his reply, oft repeated. "We have received no official intimation."

"The trial can't surely last many more days," Lord Blessington ejaculated. "They'll find for Veere to-morrow, or thereabouts, I should think!"

"I hope so, I'm sure, my lord."

"Brookie knows more than he chooses to tell us," Lady Maude whispered to her neighbour, Lee-Brice. "I don't care for these so old family servants. They're past work and they are no more faithful than the others, and they have a deal more data to betray you on. That man's been hearing from Veere every day, I fancy, and knows to a minute when he'll arrive. What does it matter, we are very happy as we are? Veere's a dear fellow, but there's a certain sense of relief at his absence, don't you think? If it was nothing else, the child seems more at ease, doesn't she?"

"How wicked you are!"

"A weight off her mind," continued Lady Maude, "and something else nice and effervescing there instead."

"She looks very well to-night, if a little preoccupied?"

"Dobrée's always preoccupied—with self, of course—and it's against her looks. There's a strong determination of per-

sonality to the tip of the nose! Sh'h! She's a dear little girl—and you mean to marry her!"

"My dear lady!"

"Authors always call one that!" said Lady Maude bluntly. "It's a little way they have. But seriously, as a race it is very different nowadays from the Early Victorian variety. Selection, I suppose—Mudie's! It didn't go out so much, and it drank much deeper. Imagine Wilkie Collins or Anthony Trollope marrying a girl like Dobrée!"

"Wanting to, even!" said he haughtily.

"Aha! I've got you to admit it! Well—well! Prosper you! You will call yourself De Saye, I presume?"

"You go rather quick, don't you, dear Lady Maude? She's still engaged to another man, more or less."

"So much less! I made that engagement. I'll unmake it if I think fit. She's, though obstinate, fairly impressionable, and the worst of her is that when you have got her jogged to a particular course of action, she takes all the credit of the initiative to herself. Oh, of course you'll marry her. It's indicated. Do you think if it hadn't been I'd have consented to such a dull time of it here? I've been simply bored to death—I came intending to have long Kreutzer-Sonata-like talks, leading to nothing, with you about our triple stained pasts, and instead you've been occupying your time corrupting the *ingenue*. If I wasn't a student of human nature and hadn't had dear little decadent Vallance and good old steady old Blessington for a derivative, I'd have gone long since. It's a bit more amusing now that poor Ernest is away. Isn't it odd—for a clever boy like him, how ill he goes with us! He doesn't amalgamate a bit. He belongs over there!" She indicated the region where the Keep was supposed to lie, with a sweep of her jewelled fingers.

"I agree with you that it is so, and he will find it out, presently."

"He's too straight—I don't say in business, but socially—for us. Too literal, too slavish, too simple. He keeps his wits for his trade, I suppose. We don't want inventions—we want epigrams. Solid qualities that will wash are no good to us. We don't want things to wash—like to knock them out and have done. Now, you do all right. You're clever!"

"I would never allow a man to call me so!" replied Lee-Brice, swallowing a little in his throat.

"I say what I like," said Lady Maude, perfectly apprehending and regardless of his feelings. "Always did. Let the glass-house authors beware! If they don't like my brusqueness

they can leave it alone—or say it's smart? I do you good, you know. . . . All right, Dobrée, I'm collected. . . . Mr. Lee-Brice has refused to amuse me any more!"

They passed into the big drawing-room, beyond which, and three or four grades lower, loomed the vaster depths of the ball-room. It was unlit to-night for some reason or other. Brooks's orders, which no one, not even Lady Dobrée, ever ventured to contravene! There were two doors at the far end, one of which led into a corridor and what was presumed to be the old kitchen of the Castle, the other, into that room which had been Sir Joris's study. Veere used that now and then, when he had business, and as a sanctum to retire to when he had the sulks.

A dart was made for the morning papers. Lord Blessington took one and Mr. Lee-Brice the other. The maxim, *place aux dames*, did not operate here; women are generally supposed to be willing to be served last with news. They shimmered about aimlessly, by the big standard lamps that were clasped in the mailed fists of armed knights, remaining on the raised plateau of the drawing-room floor, treating the lower plane of the unlit ballroom as the waters of the unknown lying at their feet. The effect was ghostly enough, and Lady Maude, gossiping with Dobrée, both outlined against the dark, looked like Geraldine in her soft green draperies and wicked light hair, betraying a Christabel.

A door banged somewhere at the end of the dancing-hall. Lady Maude shivered.

"I'm rather sorry I *décolletéed* to please you," she complained, "for there are some fearsome draughts about! I believe one of those doors at the end of the hall is open? Can't one of you men go and shut it? I would, but I'm afraid of the ghosts of armed men, and walled-in nuns. That was a chapel beyond—or was it the kitchen? The ghost of a mediæval cook would be enough for me. I wouldn't go down to the end of the room alone for the world!"

Both men ignored her appeal, so deeply were they interested in their papers. Lady Maude, psychic as usual, felt a brain wave, and grew perturbed. . . . Just as she was about to speak, Lord Blessington dropped his eye-glass on the floor, and exclaimed:

"Good God!"

Mr. Lee-Brice looked up out from his journal in which the same item of news had caught his superior natural eye a few moments ago.

"What is it, Blessington?" asked Lady Maude fretfully.

"You didn't 'Good God!' about a bit of pebble! Is it something about Ernest Veere?"

"Yes. He's lost his case, that's all!"

"Veere! Lost his case!" cried the lady. "Here, let me see!"

Tripping herself up in her tight skirts, she ran to Lord Blessington, who, helpless without the aforesaid precious pebble, was of no further use to any one. She roughly took his paper from him, while he groped senilely on the floor for his glass. Dobrée meanwhile had swung across to where Mr. Lee-Brice was sitting.

"The other man's proved it—proved it to the hilt!" shouted Lady Maude. "They have found that he's the lawful son of Sir Joris Veere all right—or all wrong! Oh, my poor Ernest! I like him, you know, and always shall!"

"How generous of you, now he's a pauper!" grumbled Lord Blessington, still on four feet looking for his eye-glass.

"He can appeal," said Lee-Brice quietly.

"But he won't!" said Lady Dobrée. "I know him. He's an utter crank!"

She spoke indifferently, carelessly, as if interested in something else. . . . Her eyes were dilated, her attitude tense, as she stared fixedly into the depths of the dancing-hall.

"What is it, Dobrée?" Lady Maude asked irritably. "You look as if you had just seen a ghost—the ghost of a fortune, eh?"

"I don't want to drive you into hysterics," said the girl, still peering intently into blackness. "But if you ask me, I am convinced there's some one there."

Lady Maude then screamed. The sound of what seemed to be a distant lock catching was distinctly heard. . . . Lord Blessington came up airily from behind the console.

"I've got it—got my eyes!" said he triumphantly. "Now let's have a look."

"Oh, damn your eyes!" cried the lady impatiently. "You won't know what's happening with them any more than you did without, will he, Laura? Do, somebody, have some sense, and turn up the lights, down there, please!"

Lord Blessington, anxious to retrieve his position in the lady's good graces, girded his old loins to tread the slippery floor of the ballroom and find the switch that would illuminate it and dispel all contumacious shadows. Dobrée, leaning over Lee-Brice's shoulder, was conning the details of the trial. The author's beautiful calm under the misfortune of another

fascinated her. She was his from that moment, and he knew it. Henceforth there were only arrangements to be made, old engagements to be politely cancelled, ways and means to be found, and old tracks to be smoothed over. He knew he had Lady Maude's suffrage—the middle-aged woman who bear-led this self-willed maiden. The girl herself unconsciously leant on his arm, with the confidence that can be reposed by a simple stalwart nature when at an early non-critical age it surrenders itself to a profound man of the world.

The switch had been found—one of them—and the shadows of the dancing-hall partially dispelled. But Lady Maude was still whimpering . . . suggesting horrors . . . pretending perhaps? Lady Dobrée drew herself up.

"Dear Maude, don't you think we have had enough ghost-talk? Why should you trouble to raise the ghost of—*my* ancestors, when you come to think? For Ernest has got no ghosts!" Lee-Brice worshipped the drawing up of the proud young lip with which she said this. "There's nothing there, you see, and the door of Ernest's study is locked, so Lord Blessington says. It always is, if he's away, I know. Brookie has instructions. So it can't have been that door you heard closing. Don't have hysterics just now when there's so much to think of."

"Of course not!" said Grace Blessington sensibly. "And Maude isn't really afraid of ghosts. She's upset by the news, that's all! We all are!"

"As far as I can make out," said her husband, who had been studying the *Times* assiduously. "we have none of us any right here in this house at all! It doesn't belong to Ernest Veere, whose guests we are, any more!"

"Surprising intelligence you do show sometimes, Blessington!" said his wife. "But I don't see, even if it is as you say, that we can be expected to turn out at once—to-night! We can pay the Pretender his hotel bill when he takes possession, if you like!"

"I dare say we shall all sleep as sound in Ernest Louis's bed as in Ernest Rose's," said Dobrée ingenuously, and every one laughed, glad that the tension was removed.

"I wonder what he's like—the Pretender, I mean?" whispered Lady Blessington.

"He's not the Pretender any more," retorted Lady Maude, also in a low voice. "Our Ernest is the outsider now. I say, if Ernest Louis is at all presentable, might the engagement be transferred, do you think?"

"Papa Angernoune would be willing, I expect," replied her friend. "But you *are* wicked!"

"Not so. *Tempora mutantur.* Come along, my little Dobrée, for it's late and there's a lot to be done to-morrow. Let us all betake ourselves to the so comfortable couch of Ernest Louis. I mean to have my nice drug sleep, in spite of the sudden change of dynasty. It's freezing, too!"

She drew her arm through that of Lady Dobrée, as they went upstairs, a stiff, irresponsive member, so it seemed. But the habit of intimacy of five years could not be so lightly discontinued, and the young girl dutifully answered her mentor's questions, albeit as shortly as she dared.

"What are you going to do about it, dear?"

"The only thing."

"Throw him over?"

"Yes."

"Have you got the other safe?"

"Yes. Good night!"

"How that girl has grown up in the last few days," thought the practised coquette as she gained her own room and Chaytor's discreet ministrations. "It is Lee-Brice who has brought her on so. Extraordinary power these journalistic people have, like the medicine-man or priest of a savage tribe! It's all numbo-jumbo, but in choice literary phrases! He has looks, too, and pots of money! These royalties he talks of, now—whatever it is, it goes on and on accumulating! It's really hardly fair. Now, poor little Vallance—no money, no inches, only a title! Veere none of the three! I suppose I shall have to console him! They'll all leave him—like rats a sinking ship. I know us—we're a low lot in our way."

She turned in.

Dobrée, entering her vast apartment on the West Turret, took up a position near the crooked window that commanded the western wall of the Keep, and commanded Parker to brush her hair, as she stood there, till she was told to desist, and not to talk.

Parker would have liked to tell her mistress that Betsey's room fronted the North, knowing full well that the pretty golden-haired woman was Lady Dobrée's objective. But she obeyed, in silence—a temporary silence as she knew it would be. The girl soon spoke.

"We shall be leaving here to-morrow, Parker."

"Yes, my lady. Where for, my lady?"

"Hell!" said Lady Dobrée with sombre emphasis, but

Parker was not much startled. She settled in her mind that the luggage would have to be labelled Castle de Saye—or perhaps Low Water, both family entrenchments where the wounded doe might retire for a season.

"Very well, my lady," she replied. "I'll write the labels."

Lady Dobrée said nothing, but continued to gaze out of the window into the black night.

The unconfidential maid could not resist the opportunity of allowing her mistress to see that she was as well primed with information as any one else, and was perfectly well acquainted with the cause of her meditated flight.

"There's a lot of talk in the village, my lady! You know that Mrs. Adamson in the Keep—well, she isn't really Mrs. Adamson at all! She's Mrs. Altamont, the wife—widow I should say—of the murderer of Sir Joris Veere. They say that Mr. Ernest oughtn't to have let her be about here in Sir Joris's own place—that it's hardly decent——"

"Hold your tongue, Parker."

"Yes, my lady."

"And yet that's boring. I want to hear what they do say, so you had better go on."

"There are two ladies in the village, my lady, lodging with Mrs. Gray in Chesters, and they say they knew Mrs. Altamont quite well, in Wimbledon, where they all live. Nasty low subbub it is, to be sure. Near your uncle's, though. And Mr. Ernest was never out of the house where Mrs. Altamont lived—Work-sop House, I think they called it. And driving her about in his motor-car and all! And then bringing her here under a false name! Seems as if he could not bear to be parted from her——"

"I don't want you to tell me any more, Parker, thank you very much. That will do. Remember, we go to-morrow. I dare say some of the others will be going too. Mr. Lee-Brice is, I know."

Complacently she laid her young head on the pillow and composed herself to sleep.

XXXVII

As Lady Maude had said, the first prickly cold of autumn was in the air. It was a night to turn in as quickly as possible, but Betsey, in her haunted chamber in the old Keep, lingered, threw clothes into bags, undid her hair in sections, and leaned on the wide window-sill, refraining, however, from lifting the pane of

glass that stood between her and the cold wind that roved over the North Sea and desultorily, now and then, smote her window, as earnest of what it could do if roused. She thought once, as she leaned very near the pane, that she heard the snort of a motor down at the garage, but thought better of it. Then Boris, the hound, barked solemnly. The moon was rising over the Bear Rocks and the ghostly crag of Spindleston; soon a flood of silver was spilled unevenly over the faintly moving plain of waters.

It seemed to toll, rather than strike, one by the Castle clock.

Some one knocked at her door.

"Get up, Betsey. Come and speak to me!"

She removed her elbows from the sill and quietly admitted Ernest Veere.

"You're dressed!"

"Did you expect me to come without?" she laughed. But she grew serious, as the sense of his attitude was perceived by her. She knew his imperturbable, inexpressive face so well now, that the least ripple of emotion was significant to her as the removal of a landmark.

"Betsey, I'm a ruined man!"

She understood at once. Her line was taken.

"Then we will to the greenwood go! You dear, to come and tell me first!"

Her warm arms were round his neck, her kisses on his mouth. . . . The young man, lapped in sensuous ease, the nervous tension he had suffered during the last few days relaxed by the warm aroma of affection she diffused, murmured, repeating the phrase automatically, "I've lost my case, Betsey! I've lost my case!"

"Of course you have. I'm sorry. I'm glad. You'll marry me, now you are ruined, won't you?"

She released him, a suggestion of granting him his unfettered freedom to answer. He smiled wryly, half pleased, half rueful.

"Well, that's one way of taking it!"

She drew him into the room, and they sat down on the bed, and he took her in his arms. They rocked together, he groaned a little, like some one hurt that she was consoling. He was cold, indeed chilled through and through with his recent long motor ride from Berwick. She apprehended that, but forbore to question him about it. She was not one for asking questions. To his body she communicated her own reserve of warmth, while to his distressed ego her seeming selfish optimism was on the whole as soothing as condolences could have been. It induced the cheerful reflection that some one at least was happy,

some one's ship had come safely to port, indirectly it might be, through his own disaster. He stroked her cheek; she pressed it against his cold hand as an animal might rub its soft velvet nose against his master. His eyes were full of unshed tears, hers were wet too, but brilliant, sparkling with new-found happiness. So they sat and swayed in loving unison.

The solitary candle, placed high on the chest of drawers, guttered in the draught, for Veere had left the door open and Betsey had not thought of shutting it. There was no danger of disturbing Ada and her child, who slept on the floor below. This predestined two were alone in the night, and the man was like an arrogant pampered child who had had a fall. The woman could almost imagine herself feeling for the bump on his forehead that it was her mission to kiss and make well. He pitied himself so. But though she comforted cunningly, she did not choose to dissimulate her own personal gladness.

Veere began to talk, to unbosom himself in the old way. He first sought her soft tingling hand in the semi-obscurity, and held it, punctuating his sharp sad sentences with grips and squeezes.

"Betsey, I'm nothing now—I'm only a nobody! I've been listening to those people in the Dwelling House——"

"Your guests?"

"They were. They're Ernest Louis's guests now—a foreigner—half! I heard them, they were discussing me. It was like assisting at my own funeral——"

"Listeners never hear any good of themselves."

"It was only for a moment, quite by accident, in the end of the big hall, as I crossed to my study from the kitchen entrance there. They heard the door opening, and they thought I was a ghost—the ghost of one of *her* ancestors, I suppose? Ha ha! I had to pass—quickly, for fear they switched on the light, but not before I'd heard enough to convince me of the value of the liking they'll transfer to the other man! I had time to see my Dobrée—leaning on Lee-Brice's arm with all her weight, no joke! —and breathing down his neck."

"She's only a child," said Betsey, who in her happiness felt she could afford to be generous. If she had not loved Ernest Veere, she could not have borne to hear him talk so, even of a girl who was preparing to jilt him. She was what she was. With some finer spun women, love would have made compliance in his attitude the more impossible. She added softly:

"There's no harm in her. A nice girl, I think. And he's a nice man, far better suited to her than you. They'll find

arms and ancestors for him, and he'll become them all right. . . . Listen, Ernest, about our own dear little affairs. . . . You and I *are* going to be married, aren't we ?"

He kissed her. "Yes, but what about Dobrée ?"

"She won't want you now. She'll cart you. After what you told me, I should just think so. She wouldn't lean heavily on a man for nothing, a stiff girl like that! And the business woman she is will throw you over the moment she hears that you're only a pauper."

"Don't be brutal. I have a little."

"Not much, but you've got your mighty talents, and little me—to help you!"

He patted her shoulder. The shadow of a smile lurked permanently in the corners of his rather cruel mouth.

"There's another thing—you have always said you didn't love me ?"

"Does this look like it ?" she cried, embracing him closely without stint or pretence of reticence. "Ernest, I have never in my life kissed any one as I am kissing you."

Her voice was deep with passion, and melodious. "I adore you—truth! I swear I do."

"Well, but at the most important moment of all—the crisis—when you consented to run away with me, you swore you didn't, and hurt my feelings very much—quite indelibly, I fear!"

Though she knew he was teasing her, she answered him seriously, putting him away from her a little.

"I didn't love you, then, when you had just made me dishonourable proposals—in the car—coming home one night—do you remember ? I thought it horrid of you."

"It *was*—horrid of me!"

"Yes, commonplace, stupid, showed a thorough want of understanding, don't you know ? It annoyed me, and hurt me, though I tried to be polite, and not huffy, for you had been so very kind. But all the same it completely dashed the poor little plant of Love that was just beginning to grow up. And of course, that day, later on, when Wilfrid, my husband, was condemned, and I consented as you say, to go with you on your own odious terms, that was temper—nothing in the world but temper! I was enraged—with the British public, for begging him off and sending me back to slavery. That was my lowest ebb of morality, that lapse, and I have been jolly well punished for it."

"How ?" said Veere indulgently. The candle on the chest of drawers guttered and went out with a plop.

"I've got another, somewhere," said Betsey, unwinding herself from his arms. Rising stiffly, she took a fresh bit of candle out of a drawer, round which she folded a piece of paper, and methodically proceeded to insert it in the candlestick on the smoking ruins of the old wick, talking all the while.

"Well, you see, in Paris . . . when you behaved so—exceptionally, I felt so snubbed that I rather hated you!"

"I couldn't possibly have profited by your forced submission—forced by circumstances! I regretted it, but do you think I didn't see that you only came to me out of temper? Why hate me for behaving decently?"

"Women do resent it, in a way, though they don't as a rule admit it. So very awkward!"

"You're not afraid of admitting anything, are you, Betsey?"

"I'm a bit exceptional, too, I suppose. And to continue with my punishment. As a result of that sort of worry and disappointment, and being thrown back on oneself, I got as nervous as a cat, all on edge somehow, I was riding on a needle-point all day and all night. You couldn't help noticing how cross and irritable I got!"

"Rather not!"

"Any woman would, thrown back on herself—thrown back *to* herself like that, no matter how wrong it was of her to give herself away in the first instance. I fretted—I worried—I cried—I lost all my looks!"

"No no!"

"Well, half my looks. That punishes you, too, for you're going to marry me, aren't you, now? Mrs. Veere won't be a roaring beauty, but a real good sort with the remains of looks. We'll do all right, won't we? It was intended, our marriage, from the beginning, Ernest, only you didn't realise, but tore off on your wild goose chase, after the aristocracy that didn't want you. I always knew—but while you were full of this craze for marrying a title, how could I, in decency, contend with it, interested as I was, personally? I just had to wait, until you came to your senses, and with the horrid fear that perhaps you never would—until it was too late. Only, luckily, this came!"

"You needn't be so pleased because I have lost a fortune."

"And got me!"

"Betsey, I can do nothing with you! You are——"

"In your arms!" she cried, triumphantly nestling.

"By the way, why were you still up and dressed at this hour?"

"Oh, I must tell you. They have found out who I am, here."

"What matter?"

"Not now, of course. Dear Ernest, so we *are* going to be married! You darling, to say it! But, before, you know you said you didn't want people to know that you were still keeping on with the notorious Mrs. Altamont, and you asked me to call myself by my real name. I thought it rather cunning, really, for Adamson isn't so very unlike Altamont, and it looks so innocent to go so near. But listen! I met two wretched women—cads—out of my old life, on the sands, ran into them. I'm a little short-sighted. And, oh! how I longed to kick the sand up into their horrid fat faces when I recognised them!"

"Betsey, no, that wouldn't have been the grand manner."

"Oh, leave that nonsense to those people in the Dwelling House that have chucked you. Well, I didn't fling any sand, I realised the need for diplomacy. I sat down beside them and entreated them fairly, hoping they would perhaps leave me and my story alone. They told me I had grown thinner and plainer——"

"Did they, really?"

"Oh, it's true. I have. Fretting about you! I could see they weren't to be bound, but would blow on me the first chance they got to give themselves consequence. They have, they've told all the village and I suppose your sweetheart's maid has told her, for I've watched her all the morning since, trying to get at me, and make me a scene. Poor little innocent thing, she was too well bred, after all, and gave it up! She really *is* a nice girl. But I had made up my mind to do what you'd like and catch the nine o'clock at Haggerdon, and I was packing up."

"And what about me?"

"I'd have written to you, dear, from the wilds of London lodgings. I shouldn't have deserted you; no fear, I love you too much. Only novel heroines go off in huffs, leaving no clue to their whereabouts—so difficult to manage—anyhow! Even a clever criminal can't. I'm just an ordinary woman, with my wits about me. And it's a good thing I didn't get off, as things have turned out, for now, perhaps, we can go together. Let's!"

"You forget. I'm not jilted yet, my dear."

"You will be, before noon to-day. I'll sit tight here till you come to me. Then we'll shake the fine dust of them off our feet, and do a bolt into the blue. They're not for us—not our sort. They have their merits—I say she's a nice little girl!—but their virtues are not yours or mine! Good form—good

birth—wait till they're on a desert island, or on an airship, as you and I'll be before we're done! You're going to invent—you're going to be a great man—unhampered by a silly fortune. You're as clever as paint, Ernest. I love you better for being a bit of a bounder! Now go. The second candle's going out, and I've got no more."

XXXVIII

Parker pottered about the now nearly empty bedroom, making all the final arrangements for departure. Lady Dobrée, neat, tailor-made, with her strong boots on, handed over her keys and went downstairs.

The gong had just sounded. She opened the door of the breakfast-room as the last reverberations echoed through the house. Brooks was ringing it with a will. His face was set like that of an old priest at the Mass. She discovered Veere alone, hovering over the sideboard.

"Good morning!" he said quietly. "What can I get you? Ham? Eggs? Devilled kidney?"

Lady Dobrée, full of tragic resolve, brimming over with her own affairs, and with a dash of condolence for the extraordinarily jaunty victim of circumstance, was much taken aback, and replied meekly, "Some devilled kidney, please."

He procured them for her, and then directed his attention to another table where stood a hissing urn and many jugs.

"Tea or coffee?"

"Tea. But I should like——"

"Well, why don't you have what you like?"

"Bother you, Ernest!"

"How nice it sounds to hear you say that again!"

"I am afraid what I want to say won't sound very nice."

"Oh, why not? Eat your breakfast, now, my dear, and then we'll see. Always have a scene on a good breakfast!"

"I'm not going to make you a scene—far from it. Only—I don't in the least know how to take this—that has happened to us!"

"To me!" he corrected gravely. "Well, take a lesson from Lady Blessington. Watch her. She's always quite correct."

Lady Blessington sailed in timidly, as a rabbit that has strayed into a neighbouring warren, and deprecatingly seized both hands of Veere, and squeezed them portentously.

"My poor boy!"

"I *am* poor."

"I know. We heard last night. I could not sleep. Ought we all to go? Surely?"

"Well, soon!" said he, "unless you stop to receive Ernest Louis?"

"My dear boy, how can you laugh?"

"That I may not weep!" said he, winking at Lady Dobrée, who found his Jack-Sheppard-like attitude charming and, now that she had made up her mind to jilt him, resented his making himself regretted.

"I was telling Ernest how sorry we all were for this bother!" she said, "and suggesting that we ought all to go?"

"And I told you to eat your breakfast first, at all events. I think my hospitality can run to that. Here's Lady Maude——"

Lady Maude came in, bade a languid good morning to the others, extended a flaccid hand to Veere, and drifted towards the sideboard.

"They've moved my Aspirin!" she observed drearily, hunting about. Veere ran forward.

"I think you'll find it here on the ledge. I took one to calm my own spirits."

"Yes, of course, you must be having any amount of low spirits. It's too bad. Ernest, don't you think us all horrid?" she asked, sitting down to cold game pie.

"Dear me, no; you are all charming, so full of soulful reticence. It is only that I, somehow, seem to have lost all point. What am I doing here? . . . Joy! Here's Mr. Lee-Brice. He's a host in himself. Now I'll leave you all. I have some work to do, as you can imagine, and he will look after you!"

Veere shook hands cordially with the author in the doorway. Not a word was spoken. The freemasonry between two essentially good fellows served to bridge the gulf set across successful and unsuccessful. The author had no need of words to convey the correctness of his attitude and the sufficiency of sympathy he was able to place at the service of the man who had lost a fortune and was now to lose the titled bride who went with it. Veere was not really to be pitied. He was to find his happy level by-and-by. Lee-Brice was well aware of the golden-haired mitigation of the blow that existed in the shape of the beloved waiting for her lover in the grey old Keep opposite. Veere would fall on his feet, or rather, on the breast of a kind woman that adored him as he was—a decent young fellow without tact, or *chic*, or art feeling.

He sat down, in a masterful way, in the chair next Lady Dobrée on which she had carelessly laid her handkerchief.

He handed it to her. They ate together in silence. The other two women, declaring that they meant to ask Brookie for a Bradshaw, presently sidled out. The two were alone.

"I have not had a chance of speaking to Ernest yet," said she, peeling a peach.

"What, not to condole!"

"Oh yes, that! But I mean I haven't told him yet that I mean to throw him over! I don't fancy he'll care at all, but still it's an unpleasant sort of thing to blurt out, just when a man's down!"

"The nail of one disappointment will knock out the other."

"I don't flatter myself the second nail will be strong enough," she replied modestly. "Besides, the first is the cause of the second. I happen to know that I'm so constructed that I cannot stand poverty—I can't even stand the hand-to-mouth existence I am leading with a cheap maid and "little" dressmaker much longer. And even if you are good enough to go on helping me, I shall never be able to make anything by writing!"

"But it's a smart thing and a profitable for husband and wife to collaborate. The Markhams do a roaring business. Their joint royalties amount to——"

"You would have to change your form a good deal before a woman could be seen dead collaborating with you, wouldn't you?" Lady Dobrée said, trying to hide her very comparative degree of embarrassment.

He laughed. "Good! Very good! But let me tell you I have exhausted that phase of me. I shall write no more books to be burned by the common hangman. I've worked that vein sufficiently. I've done my work of 'pure ablution round our human shores.' I can take the other thing in my stride. I shall give my attention henceforth to the Beautiful, the Pure, the Clean—I shall aim at a Rectory circulation in fact!"

"All right!" she laughed. "I'm with you—on the cover of that book, at all events. The rest—well, we must get things settled first. I can count on you, can't I?"

"Throughout! From cover to cover," he said. The literary form of courtship appealed to this wayward child, as he could see. She smiled and spoke to him seriously.

"Would you mind calling Ernest? I hear him outside there talking to Brookie, and I'll settle things now."

"Brava!" said he. Going to the door, he called:

"Mr. Veere, Lady Dobrée wants you."

Turning to the young girl, who had risen, he added, "And now I'll leave you."

"Please don't . . . Ernest, I think of going home to-day. Can I be motored over to Low Water?"

"Certainly. It's quite the best plan for you," he answered stolidly, leaning against the jamb of the door.

She looked nonplussed. "But don't you see what that means?"

"What does it mean? I am waiting to hear."

Lady Dobrée was vexed with his nonchalance, and spoke out hardily.

"It means, Ernest, that I am a thoroughly worldly woman, and that, barring a certain amount of liking which I'm not cad enough to deny, I was in the main marrying you for money."

He bowed. "Money, which I haven't got. That settles me."

"Yes. And—" she hesitated, and then looked at Lee-Brice, who stood, conventionally drooping, but with the springs of action tense and ready to move in her service. "Did you realise why I wouldn't let this man go and let us have our talk alone?"

Veere laughed, rather noisily. "My dear Dobrée, nothing surely could have been more obvious, even to my limited social intelligence. You have taken a weight off my mind. I'm delighted with you—both. Will you go on being my friends? Don't go, Lee-Brice, stay here, and let us all be sensible and plain, as she has given us the cue. Dobrée, shall I say what you want to say, for you?"

"You may try," said the girl smiling.

"Well, it is this. Not much. You have just heard that I am a pauper—what amounts to a pauper, since it doesn't amount to an income worthy of you, and your aims. You are, therefore, desirous of breaking off, here and now, our absurd and improper engagement."

"That's it—to a T—only I shouldn't perhaps have used the word absurd of anything I once thought fit to do."

"You always were a bit of a prig, dear. Well, it's all right now, isn't it? I think I'll have some more breakfast." He felt one of the milk-jugs to see if the milk it contained was still warm. . . . He shook his head and turned up the wick, below the brass stand that supported it, a little higher.

The author, immensely moved and interested by this scene, would not have given up his front place at the show for worlds. He handed Ernest Veere the sugar. Lady Dobrée ministered to her whilom lover with the cream.

"And since we are all so friendly," she said, "are you going to marry Mrs. Altamont?"

"Betsey? Certainly," he replied with his mouth full.

"Well, that's cool!" Lady Dobrée ejaculated involuntarily.

"We're all cool—damn cool. I've been admiring it. So is the bacon, by the way."

By this time Lady Dobrée was quite at her ease. With a little shrug at Lee-Brice, she entered heartily into the spirit of the vulgar little comedy which was yet all their lives. She was no actress, but she attempted to draw up her mouth into a *moue* expressive of disappointment.

"And I am to be left lamenting?"

"I'm afraid so—unless . . . For I must to the greenwood go, alone, a banished man. No, not alone, thank God!"

He munched . . . Lee-Brice, laughing, came forward, and took Lady Dobrée's hand:

"We could not allow that. If my poor royalties——?"

A Real Upper House

By Frederic Harrison

The reconstitution of our Upper House of Parliament is at once the most urgent, the most difficult, and in its consequences the most far-reaching of all the reforms of our time. As an old historian and constitutional lawyer, as a veteran reformer who is absolutely detached from any party interest, an onlooker who sees the futility of all revolutionary hustling in such an historic monarchy as ours, I put forth again the same scheme for dealing with the problem of the Lords' Veto which for years I have urged in essays to the public and have privately suggested to Liberal statesmen.

We may start with three axioms which to practical and thoughtful minds need no discussion:

(1) Heredity as giving any right to legislate is effete.

(2) A real and strong Second Chamber is a *sine qua non* of efficient legislation and government.

(3) A true Second Chamber must have for its sole title personal merit and service combined with elective choice.

For many years, and long before the formation of the Liberal Government of 1905, I ventured to insist that effective power both for legislation and for administration was rapidly passing from the House of Commons to the House of Lords. This became visible when Mr. Gladstone sustained his second rebuff over Home Rule in 1893; and in his last farewell speech in the House—a speech too little understood and too soon forgotten—he plainly acknowledged this. Now the ascendancy of the predominant House has burst upon Liberals like a thunderstorm, forcing them to take drastic and immediate action, if Liberalism and Reform are in our generation to have any free life at all.

It must be a mind incurably light-headed which could regard this tremendous problem of reconstituting a permanent Second Chamber as a thing to be run up in a crisis, or even disposed of in a single session. A Constitution like ours, with centuries of glorious traditions inwoven into its fibres and embedded in its

roots, does not spring up from a Ministry in flux like the Goddess of Wisdom from the brain of Zeus. It is enough to exhaust the whole energies of one entire Parliament of the normal term. I vehemently deprecate any attempt to rush a revised British Constitution in a Parliament "on the make."

As a temporary expedient to tide over an obstinate financial and administrative deadlock, an *eirenicon* between two contending parties, I suggest that the leaders of both sides in the two Houses might agree to a simple suspensory Act by which, for a definite period, the legislative powers of the House of Lords should be transferred to the existing Privy Council, or to a large Parliamentary Committee of the Privy Council. Such an Act (only possible by agreement) would be a sort of *moratorium*, as they call it in the civil law abroad, an "emergency exit" from a dilemma, an interim House of Lords such as would have to be found if Barry's Golden Chamber—*absit omen*—were burned down.

The Privy Council is at least as ancient, as historic, as honourable as the House of Lords. It consists almost exactly of three hundred members, the ideal number of a true Senate. Its three hundred members, every one of whom sits by personal nomination for known public service, immensely outweigh in capacity, in authority, in experience, the peers irreverently called "the backwoodsmen." About a hundred peers, one-third of the whole, are now Privy Councillors. Amongst them are almost every peer who took any part in the Budget debate, and perhaps all of those whom Lord Rosebery declared carried weight in the country. All living Ministers, heads of departments, and eminent public servants are Privy Councillors, the present and the late Cabinets and their colleagues; and I see no reason why members of the House of Commons need be excluded if they are Privy Councillors. The whole three hundred are men of long experience of public duties and personally known to the public. They comprise almost all the classes of men which the thoughtful schemes for forming a Senate propose to include. They are as a body preponderatingly Conservative. But is it conceivable that this country will elaborate any Senate which is not Conservative? Conservative as the majority is, the minority of Liberals in the Council is of conspicuous ability and force. And the Conservative majority consists of men all of whom are amenable to public opinion, men who have passed long lives in compromises and in avoiding desperate risks, men of the temper of Wellington, Grey, and Peel, who knew when obstinacy spelt ruin, to whom the true Conservatism was in using to the best end any inevitable development.

A REAL UPPER HOUSE

The existing Privy Council is even now something like a fair type of an efficient Senate, and it could easily be made a much more true type. For the moment of crisis, I think reasonable reformers of the House of Lords might consent to accept it for a Second Chamber until the new British Constitution were ready and at work. A permanent Second Chamber could only be evolved out of the heated debates of many sessions. And what are we to do in the interval, whilst legislation and even taxation is suspended in the air? As to immediately sterilising the Peers by abolishing their right to reject Bills, and so establishing, before Easter 1910, a Single-Chamber Constitution—it is an idle dream to nurse, and would need a revolution to enforce.

For my own part I should be content to take the Privy Council as the basis of an efficient Senate, and form out of it, as a revising Second Chamber, a Parliamentary Committee, in which all Ministers could sit, as in France. And of course the jurisdiction of the House of Lords as a Court of Appeal would be absorbed in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, so as to form one supreme tribunal for the whole Empire. The Privy Council might then consist of a small professional Judicial Committee and a large Parliamentary Committee. This scheme, indeed, would satisfy the claim of the extreme Radical wing by terminating the House of Lords in its legislative capacity, whilst it maintains the whole effective force of the Peers in a real and strong Second Chamber.

But having regard to the immense prestige of our historic House of Lords, and the tremendous shake to British traditions which "ending" the Lords would involve, I proceed to consider the current projects for "mending" rather than "ending" the Upper House.

The question owes everything to Lord Rosebery. Four times within the last forty years, both in office and out of office, in a series of powerful speeches he has warned his fellow-peers and has implored his fellow-countrymen to set about reform of the House of Lords. The Report of his Special Committee (December 2, 1908) settled the matter in principle, though the timidity and prejudice of his colleagues reduced the scheme to absurdity and impotence. But when the most-powerful Committee that the Lords have ever chosen reported—that "the possession of a peerage should not of itself give the right to sit and vote in the House of Lords"—the white flag went up on those ancient towers. *Roma locuta est—causa finita est.* Every Prime Minister within a generation, excepting Mr. Balfour—and we cannot

except Lord Salisbury—has formally declared that the maintenance of a purely hereditary Chamber is impossible. No hereditary legislature exists in Europe. And as for fifty years past the ablest peers have attempted to reform it, we cannot doubt that reform is inevitable and urgent.

A real and efficient Senate should be limited, as is that of France, to three hundred members. Every one of these should be formally selected by some authoritative body. They would all take the oath of a Privy Councillor and would have the official responsibility of a Cabinet Minister. It is needless to encumber the scheme with miscellaneous *ex-officio*, honorary, or senile members. The three hundred Senators should each be chosen on the ground of personal capacity to serve the State. All special qualifications should be discarded, for even that of age has no force in a country wherein Pitt was Prime Minister at twenty-four and Gladstone was Prime Minister at eighty-four.

It would be revolutionary unreason to deny the Peers any voice in the constitution of a Senate. And I suggest that fifty Senators to serve during each Parliament should be selected by the whole body of peers, British, Scotch, and Irish, not excluding peeresses in their own right. These now amount altogether to some seven hundred. And I propose that these seven hundred should elect at each Parliament fifty Senators, who might be peers, commoners, or ecclesiastics of any Church. They would no doubt usually be peers, and would include all those who spoke in recent debates and who had served in any office. It would be folly to water down the Senate with *ex-officio*, and possibly senile, veterans, who might repose on their honours without public burdens. The representation of minorities will be dealt with in a later passage.

A second list of fifty Senators would be nominated for life by the Crown, subject, of course, to the advice of Ministers, but with a limitation that not more than ten could be created in any single year, so that both parties would be represented in proportion to the period of tenure of power. For the original creation the first list would be a subject of mutual agreement between the actual and the late Ministries, as, indeed, the entire scheme here proposed could only take effect after common arrangement for a compromise.

We have thus a body of a hundred members, one-third of a Senate of three hundred, who would have been selected either by the entire peerage without any restriction, or by the Crown under the responsible advice of Ministers of either party. These hundred would in practice be found to be peers whose

services had long been before the country, and would include all available statesmen whom reasonable men would expect to find in a Second Chamber. They would be (in the higher sense of the term) eminently Conservative; their influence in such a Senate would be far greater than it is now in a House of Lords, the prestige of which has been finally destroyed by the wisdom of the best of them and by the folly of the worst. It is a dream to imagine that our Parliamentary system can ever be recast—apart from real revolution—without retaining a strong Conservative element. For my own part, I have insisted for these thirty years that, in our antique political system, orderly progress could only be retarded by blind adhesion to the formulas of a doctrinaire democracy.

But, though I am no "democrat" in the proper sense of the word, I am convinced that legislation and government are impossible in the twentieth century unless they have express authority from the nation as a whole. No crude referendum *ad hoc*, no universal suffrage in direct legislation, no plebiscite, no Single-Chamber Convention, will permanently satisfy this people of England—for all these are devices of doctrinaire democracy. The only verdict which will satisfy this people in the long run and which will truly express the authority of the nation is the collective judgment of the best minds which it chooses to guide it in the vast complications and dilemmas of national action. In other words, this means our secular trust in the familiar method of elective representation. It is only doctrinaire Abbés Siéyès who could dream that the legislation of this huge Empire could ever be entrusted to *ex-officio* Notables of any kind, who, with the veteran's wooden sword, have usually parted with the rapier of their own brains. Representation by chosen men of experience is of the essence of what Englishmen know in politics or will accept in government. But then representation must be absolutely elective, and not, under any cover, official and automatic.

We come, then, to the substantial part of a permanent Senate—two hundred members to be elected by the three kingdoms—two-thirds of the whole. The many various and incompatible bodies which have been proposed as electors are too complicated and miscellaneous to satisfy British plain sense. And the various and incongruous classes of persons who are proposed as qualified to be chosen are equally needless and unworkable. The main body of Senators—the two hundred chosen by popular election—should all stand on equal and identical origin, and should all be chosen by the same votes.

Are the two hundred Senators to be elected by direct popular suffrage, and by the same electors as the Commons are chosen? Certainly not! If they were, the community of interest and of feeling would make them the same. All sense of balance and compensation between the two Houses would be obscured. They would not be in effect two Chambers, but only one. The essence of a Second Chamber is to bring a moderating and critical judgment to bear on measures voted by a democratic House. The Senates of the Republics of the United States and France are elected by indirect suffrage—in both cases by local provincial Chambers. No Senate having any credit in ancient or in modern times was a mere second edition of a democratic House. For our seven and a half millions of electors at the same time, in the same way, to choose 670 Deputies and 300 Senators out of the same classes of candidates would be to lessen the authority of both, and would be nothing but a clumsy way of arriving at a One-Chamber system.

To make a Senate a moderating and revising force, its members must be different men, of a different order, chosen by a different order of electors. The election must be indirect—by elected bodies charged with local public duties. We shall have to follow the French and the American systems, in which the Senate is elected by departmental councils and by State legislatures. We have an analogous set of administrative bodies in the three kingdoms in the county councils, which now co-opt their own aldermen. It would be a simple and familiar practice for two hundred Senators to be chosen by the county councils of England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. There would be no good at all in introducing the complication of several administrative bodies as electors. We all know and understand the constitution of the county councils. To entrust to them the election of Senators would improve their own credit.

Does this exclude urban municipalities as electors to the Senate? Yes! The Senate, taking the place of the House of Lords, would represent territorial, and not municipal interests. Our urban electors have a preponderating voice in the House of Commons, for of course the nominal county electors are only in a small part really "rurals," being largely made up from towns with populations of upwards of a thousand. The House of Lords to-day is in overwhelming degree territorial. And any Senate which in this country can be found to take its place will have to be also territorial. It will be observed that election by county councils is not the futile system of double election as for the

President of the United States, where the electing delegates have no permanent public duty, but are merely the channel by which votes are recorded.

An efficient Senate should not only admit of a certain diversity of members, but should also be elected at different periods, and be constantly recruited and renewed. That is the practice both in France and in the United States, as well as in our own county councils and other bodies. We have already proposed three different classes of Senators, three different modes of selection, and three different periods of service, allowing for ample change of policy and of men. The fifty Senators elected by the whole body of the peerage would be elected for each Parliament, of course with complete power of re-election. The fifty Senators selected by the Crown with the advice of the Ministers of the day would serve for life. The two hundred Senators to be elected by the county councils of the three kingdoms would be elected either for a term of ten years, one-half retiring each five years, or for a period of nine years, one-third retiring every three years. Needless to elaborate details when the general principle is clear. Peerage Senators would serve for a Parliament; Life Senators as long as they were able to serve; County Senators for periods of nine or ten years, with renewals every three or every five years.

Of course, as the counties differ greatly in population, energy, and wealth, we should not follow the absurd system of America, where each State, large or small, sends two Senators, so that New York and Florida count alike. The West Riding and Rutland would not have an equal voice in any Senate of ours. Obviously the county councils would return Senators in proportion to their numbers—but to the number of their own constituents, not of the mere population. No difficulty need arise in assigning to each county council the number of Senators it would elect in proportion to the number of its own constituents, so that the two hundred Senators should be distributed amongst 126 county councils according to the electoral register of each council. If, by this, Scotland and Ireland would each hold about one-ninth of the whole two hundred, the effect would be eminently Conservative. But Conservatism is the essence of a true Senate, and, in fact, is its real *raison d'être*.

Not only would the apportionment of Senators be in proportion to the electoral strength of each county, but it would be essential to make all kinds of Senatorial elections on the proportional system. Otherwise the fifty Peerage Senators would all be of one colour, as are the Irish and Scotch Representative Peers.

And to a great extent the County Senators would be too much of one party. The Life Senators would belong to different parties, inasmuch as they were created under the auspices of successive Ministries. But in an eminent degree the two hundred County Senators must be elected on a very strict proportional system.

Proportional election has been admirably illustrated by Lord Courtney, Lord Avebury, and many experienced politicians. And it has been earnestly preached by eminent philosophers since the time of John Stuart Mill. Theoretically, its claims are unanswerable, and it clearly removes some of the worst evils of our present system. But, impressed as I am with its logical value, since the time of Mill and of Thomas Hare, I have stoutly repudiated it as applicable to our own Parliamentary elections. And I utterly repudiate it still as a working possibility to be used by seven and a half millions of half-literate electors. They can hardly manage the elementary voting-paper now in use—which a child or a blind man could understand. The proportional system of voting, which is far too complex for the masses, is peculiarly fitted for election by small bodies of educated and practical politicians who all know each other and can confer and sound each other in the same place. Under the scheme here proposed, the entire number of electors, whether peers or county councillors, would be well under ten thousand persons. They would vote in less than two hundred separate colleges or groups. They would all be public men who had known every kind of electoral method all their lives. They would thus be able to make use of the elaborate contrivances of the proportional system for recording varieties of personal choice; and they would not be puzzled by the novelties which could only bewilder the average voter in the street.

A Senate thus chosen, in part by the whole peerage, in part by the Crown and Ministry, and as to two-thirds by the county councils of the three kingdoms in proportion to their strength, would be a real Second Chamber, amply qualified to review, amend, postpone the Bills passed by a democratic First House; for it would contain all that the country offers best of experience and judgment. As yet nothing has been said on the burning question of the hour—the *Veto*—the power of the "Upper House" to amend, block, and reject the Bills sent up by the "Lower House."

As to the sole and exclusive power of the People's House of Commons to vote the taxes and to control every form of financial operation, it is waste of time now to argue a point which is

an axiom of popular government. If the claim of any other authority to interfere with this basic right of the Commons were to be admitted, their House would be shut up as effectually as ever the Rump was by Cromwell. It is not a matter of precedents, and "custom," and constitutional doctrine. All that it has and without limits. It is rather a matter of practical necessity. With our enormously complicated industry, our vast resources and obligations, and the amplification in our age of administrative and "urgency" business, Exchequer debts and payments must be finally settled at once and by one body. The attempt to criticise and finally reject a Budget six months after it had been brought in was not only a constitutional outrage, but it was a wild revolutionary *coup d'état*. We have witnessed its evils once for all—and we can never submit to have them forced on us again.

It is right that ample provision be made to prevent any form of "tacking." As Lord Courtney says—and there is no higher authority—this can be effected without difficulty. With this limitation, every form of tax must be left, as for centuries it has been left, at the sole disposal of the House of Commons. Where would be the Bank of England or the North-Western Railway if, six months after their respective Boards of Directors had undertaken enormous liabilities and calculated on enormous returns to balance their accounts, small knots of preference stockholders could come in and undo their whole work? It would mean bankruptcy for a trading company—and it would mean anarchy for a nation.

But, subject to the whole sphere of finance—which is a thing of emergency, and can be revised and changed from year to year, and even from session to session—all Bills sent up to the Second Chamber from the First must be open to complete amendment or rejection. If this were not so, we should fall back on a One-Chamber system, disguise it how we will. The Campbell-Bannerman scheme of 1906, besides its other defects, really amounts to sterilising the Second Chamber, which would have power to delay, but not to prevent, mischievous Bills carried through in a storm of enthusiasm by a democratic House. The out-and-out Democrat, or the doctrinaire Radical, may be willing to accept the decision of the Elect of the People. But the inherent practical sense of the British nation, much less the collective forces of those who control property, wealth, and industry, will never accept as final the decisions of what would be in effect a National Convention. The examples of our Long Parliament, or, in recent times, of the French Assembly

elected in 1871, are instructive. Socialists may dream of the good time to come when 670 salaried delegates, pledged to the party ticket, may decree the democratic republic, vote themselves "in permanence," and abolish private property, and one or two familiar institutions. Englishmen will hold on by a Second Chamber, quite distinct in constitution and in origin from the First, and having a real power, not only to delay, but to moderate the legislation of the First Chamber.

The Campbell-Bannerman scheme for reiterated consideration of Bills where profound differences of opinion are found to divide the Upper and the Lower House has great advantages, and might be incorporated for purposes of mature deliberation—with exception of its final term, by which the will of the House of Commons is paramount and ultimately will override the opposition of the House of Lords. After all is said, this is really the Single-Chamber system—the democratic ideal to which we may doubt if England is as yet ready to submit.

What other solution from the dilemma is possible? The Constitution of France—and, for my part, I hold that to be the best type of State system in the modern world—the Constitution and practice of France offer a possible issue. It is, that in the final stage of the struggle between the two Houses in the Campbell-Bannerman plan of 1906 the Upper and the Lower House, or the First and Second Chamber, should sit together as one House and enter on a final debate and take a decisive vote. Then, if the contested Bill were carried by a two-thirds majority in the compound House, it might become law. If it failed to get a bare majority it would drop. If having a majority, but less than two-thirds of the whole composite House, there would be no alternative but an appeal to the electors—not of one House, but of both Houses.

It will be noticed that if the number of the House of Commons remains unchanged at 670, and the proposed Upper Chamber is reduced to 300, the combined House of both sitting together (one would suppose in Westminster Hall) would consist of 970. One-third of this, say 323, is rather in excess of the whole Second Chamber; and the two-thirds would be 647, or 23 below the normal House of Commons.

The result of a final vote in the double House would be this. A majority consisting of two-thirds of the Upper House, plus one-fifth of the Lower House, would be able to defeat any Bill (not being financial) that had been passed in the House of Commons. A Bill which in the double House did not get a

vote of 485 would drop. If it passed by a vote exceeding 485, but less than 647, a dissolution is inevitable sooner or later. But it will be noticed that in the scheme proposed here it is not possible for the Upper Chamber to penalise the Lower by decreeing a dissolution from which it is exempt itself. As here proposed, at every new Parliament both Houses would have to be re-elected, with the exception only of the fifty life members of the Upper House.

Such is the scheme I propose for a permanent Upper House. It is put forth without any regard to party interests or the Ministerial projects that have yet to be revealed. It is framed on my sole responsibility, without concert or knowledge of any one in public or in private life. It has been written before the Cabinet has met.

The Party System

By Hilaire Belloc, M.P.

The machinery of Government in this country has stopped working. It has got clogged, and the wheels won't go round. The cause of this breakdown is the introduction into a machine, the scheme and construction of which is now of one sort, a number of parts and a method of action of a totally different sort. The two cannot agree and the whole thing has stuck.

The machinery of Government is to-day definitely based upon the theory of representation. For three generations that theory has been more and more widely spread, more and more insisted upon in the public mind, and more and more accepted as the essential character of the machine ; to-day it is universal. Side by side with the wider and wider acceptation of that idea, a practice in the running of that machine, at first divergent from and now completely contradictory of the idea of representation, has prevailed. The two could not co-exist and we have come to a deadlock.

The theory of representative Government may be easily stated : The nation is asked to choose a small body of men each of whom shall present in a national council the opinion of the section of the nation which sent him there. The deliberations of this council will, therefore, reflect the national mind. Its conclusions will be the expression of the national will. When there is a clear conflict between two policies the council shall vote, and a majority of votes shall decide. In this way shall the laws of the nation be made and in this way shall its policy of peace or war be determined. Many methods might be devised for the selection of such deputies : the sections of the nation consulted may be separate trading interests, or separate religious bodies, or separate localities : alternative voting, proportional voting, and a hundred other schemes may be adopted. The traditional and existing method of representation in the United Kingdom is the choice usually of one, sometimes of two, candidates by a majority of votes cast within a particular geographical area. But whatever the method of choice, it has for

its object the result just defined, the formation of a national council which shall reflect the national mind and whose decisions (to be arrived at in case of conflict by the decision of the majority) shall be as nearly as possible the expression of the national will.

This theory may be right or wrong. No one has ever disputed the universal conception that the community is sovereign and is the rightful master of its own destiny, but many have denied and do deny that the mind of the nation is best expressed in so mechanical a fashion. It has been argued, and is maintained by some of the closest observers of men and of the clearest thinkers, that men acting collectively have no true will, and no one mind in common, and that even such of a common mind or will as a collective body may possess, disappear altogether in the confusion, mixed issues, and varied degrees of information or judgment involved in a public vote. There is even very much more to be said against the representative theory of government than this; but we are concerned here not with whether it is right or wrong, but with the fact that it is the theory upon which the machinery of our Government now reposes. Those who accept, and still more those who believe in, a representative system defend it by pointing out that, as local isolation has disappeared and the systems of local self-government which are everywhere native to man in the village and the tribe are to-day impossible, such a central elected body, however imperfect, must be the supreme authority in the State if the citizens are to maintain any control of their own destinies; and it is further argued with great justice that the only alternative to such a scheme in large and highly civilised States is despotism. Now a despotism (it is further advanced) cannot, however popular, for long truly express the will of the nation and the demands of the community.

A representative assembly so formed needs an Executive and that Executive must be small, for while many can decide it is impossible in human affairs that a great number should actually govern. The nature of man will not have it so. But that Executive has another function beside the function of applying the laws, for it must perpetually act upon its own judgment in matters of detail. The great Latin formula which Tacitus puts into the Constitution of his Ideal Primitive Community represents a permanent and necessary condition of healthy politics. "All are consulted upon major matters, but in minor matters the rulers decide." It is almost self-evident that a State in which this principle was forgotten would be a

State diseased, and one in which it was not recovered would be a State doomed to death.

Now the Executive may exist as a very excellent and well-working institution, in a number of forms: it may be hereditary; it may even be nominated by ballot; but the full theory of representative government will not have it so, and according to this theory (right or wrong) the Executive must consist of men not only responsible to, but actually members of, the national council. Only thus (it is argued) can you be sure that the nation is fully and actually governing itself.

Upon such postulates is based that conception of Government which we hear reiterated daily in our political life, which is the commonplace of every text-book, which is taken for granted upon every platform, and which underlies every public speech.

The House of Commons is a representative assembly the members of which are chosen by the people and each member of which represents the opinion of those who sent him. The Executive is a small committee of men chosen from whatever bulk of opinion prevails in the assembly and warranted, by their political action in the past and their general agreement with the majority of their colleagues, to carry out in the details of their executive action the spirit which animates the greater part of the representative body. But their dependence upon the national will is guaranteed in a manner much more strict and practical than their mere choice. In all their actions they are responsible to a majority in the House of Commons, and if one of them fails to obtain even in some detail of his action the approval of the representative assembly, the Executive must be changed at the bidding of that assembly. As for major things, laws of large import and general national policies, those of course are entirely within the sphere of the assembly and the Executive is but the servant of the assembly in such matters.

Such is the theory. In practice we have arrived at a condition in the machinery of Government the exact reverse of all that has been set down above. We have not arrived at a theory of Government in opposition to the representative theory, we are not possessed of a machine which, rightly or wrongly, is based on something other than the representative theory, and which, so based, is working well. We are possessed of a machine every one of whose functions is based upon, and co-ordinated by, the theory of representative Government, but the practice of working it is so much the negation of that theory that the machine has broken down. To see in what way this has happened it will be well to set down here the method on which

it is still attempted to conduct the business of the nation. That method is called the Party System, and it works thus:

Two sets of men (the number who really count on either side is less than a dozen) oppose each other as two such sets might oppose each other in any fair and equally balanced game. These two teams form the permanent nucleus of the system. The medium in which they work—the House of Commons—is in a constant state of flux: but the two teams form the staff and *their* action alone is continuous.

The method of recruiting these two teams, "the pick-up" (as we used to say at school when we chose sides for a football match), is one of co-option under the general direction of a leader or captain on either side, whose weight is always greater than that of his colleagues, though his power of choosing new members varies according to his experience, character, and position, and also according to the interests of the moment within the little body he commands. When a vacancy occurs by death, bankruptcy, fatigue, or in some other fashion, it is filled up by this leader and his colleagues, who choose from among several candidates one; and he being thus chosen continues the life of the permanent body here described. Each team fills up its own vacancies (though it is sometimes helped by the friendly advice of the other), but each is careful to show courtesy to the other in its selection, and to consider the social standing, influence, and position of the new candidate in their relation to the opposing team.

The considerations which decide the adoption of a candidate for a vacancy are numerous and agreeable to the part he will be called upon to play. A power of advocacy is perhaps the most important, that is, the power to defend any proposition he may be called upon (at a moment's notice) to agree with. Wealth is not forgotten; hereditary wealth has a very considerable place; general ability and industry often count as much as advocacy itself, and with a great number, perhaps the majority of vacancies to be filled, the relationship or connection by marriage, or immediate friendship, with some member or members of the two teams is a deciding factor.

Latterly, the family motive for choice has been rather humorously exaggerated. Should a traveller land, say, in Constantinople, and be told that the Turkish State was torn between two rival philosophies, headed the one by such and such a group of men, the other by such and such another group, were he told that the rivalry had almost reached the point of civil war and that the difference between them was like the difference between

two religions, he would, indeed, be surprised to hear that the reigning Grand Vizier was brother-in-law to a gentleman whose sister had married the late Grand Vizier just hurled from power. He would be astonished to learn that the Commander-in-Chief had a step-daughter who was the step-aunt of the Commander of the rebel army. It would not surprise him to discover that two charming ladies in the society of Constantinople having two daughters to marry, the one had become the daughter-in-law of the Minister of Public Instruction, the other had become the wife of the Minister of Public Worship, but he would be bewildered when he was further told that her closest friend was the late Minister of Marine hurled from power for his unpatriotic and corrupt policy. He would ask why the *late* Master of Ceremonies was the brother-in-law of the *present* Chief of Police, and why a pleasant young man recently appointed to the leadership of the Customs was at once the first cousin by marriage of the Sheik-ul-Islam and the nephew by marriage of the Governor of Yemen who had recently left the country upon the discovery of his seditious conspiracy. I say a foreigner in Constantinople would be astonished to hear that Government and Opposition were so closely interrelated, but the picture thus drawn is, if the titles but not the relationship be changed, an exact portrait of what a nominally "representative" system has produced in England.

Nevertheless in a country plutocratically governed and oligarchic by tradition, this habit of selection by marriage and relationship, coupled with the other factors I have named, do not make a bad set of rules for producing the type of crew which the Party System presupposes. Errors are constantly made, and a man ill-suited to the pastime is co-opted because some one of the factors I have mentioned has been misjudged or overrated. But even when such an error has been committed, the team and its leaders reserve the power to discard the offending member in spite of his protests, and examples of this process of excretion have latterly been fairly common. Such a function is necessary to the vigour of the system, and its active working is the proof of that system's vitality.

It will immediately be perceived how elastic and, therefore, how efficient (for its own purposes) the method is. There are, indeed, but two mechanical rules which the players are bound to observe: the first is that no man can be so chosen who is dumb, or even very hoarse, no matter what his abilities in every other department of human energy save that of speech. The second is that the successful candidate must be a member of one of the two Houses of Parliament.

One of the teams so chosen receives (with the exception of a couple of honorary members) large sums of money from the public taxes: which of the two and how it is determined will be presently described. These sums vary from an average of under £30 a week for the lesser posts up to a normal stipend of £100 a week for the more important, while one or two of the prizes drawn represent £200 a week, and possibly with prequisites a trifle more. A number of other facilities are added to the various posts: sometimes a residence, always a number of secretaries, the right in some cases to travelling expenses, in others an allowance for entertainment, and in all the expenses of postage public and private. The reader will easily perceive that the game is worth the candle.

These two teams, I say, "oppose" each other; that is, the game is played like any other game, by one team facing the other, and proceeding according to certain rules to struggle for an advantage. That team which is in actual possession of the salaries sits upon the right-hand front bench of the House of Commons. The unsuccessful team sits upon the corresponding bench opposite, which is called the Opposition Front Bench. These terms have given rise to the distinctive title "a Front Bench man."

Between the two teams is a large table on the corners of which are empty boxes which the speakers hit.

It remains to be discovered how one team is distinguished from another and what it is that puts upon the Treasury Bench the salaried or successful half of the players.

It is the custom for each of these bodies to choose some legislative policy. Sometimes the initiative lies with one, sometimes with the other. On certain occasions (the election of 1906 was one of them) no definite policy is chosen by either side, and the appeal becomes largely a personal one. But, as a rule, elections are held throughout the country upon two contrasted policies. Every precaution is taken that the electors shall have no opportunity of hearing arguments concerning any other points than the two points chosen by the players. Even where there is a strong desire on the part of the electorate to have some other matter described to them, that matter is put in the second plane; the candidates for election are concerned for the major part of their interest and speeches to the programme laid down by the two Front Benches, and on this the counting of the votes takes place. Sometimes the electorate gets a little out of hand (as, for instance, in 1906, on the subject of Chinese labour), and it is part of the game to study such rare spontaneous movements

closely, but in general an election turns upon the issues decided by the chief players.

It must here be remarked that at first the policy proposed may or may not be serious. Sometimes one of the teams believes it possible to carry into law a proposal upon which an appeal is made. Sometimes one, sometimes the other, and occasionally both, have no intention of carrying their programme into law; but this matter of sincerity is not regarded as germane to the business, which is to obtain for the one or the other programme to which either team is "pledged" (as the phrase goes) a majority of seats in the House of Commons. The election over, the members returned to the House divide themselves into two bodies. The one body votes invariably and mechanically in favour of whatever the team which has obtained its majority may propose, no matter whether it is proposed seriously or no, no matter whether the proposals put before them be wholly novel and hitherto unheard of, no matter whether these proposals be to the common knowledge of every member grossly distasteful to the mass of the people of England. Conversely, members returned in support of the other team vote against the successful team.

The team with the majority sits on the Treasury Bench and takes the salaries and proposes one piece of legislation after another. The team opposite is for the moment deprived of salaries and criticises and negatives all that the successful team puts forward. Seven years in legal right, six in practice, is the limit during which the successful team may continue to propose (and to pass through the Commons) any legislation which may occur to it.

It may be asked how, under such circumstances, Governments ever fall in less than six years. There are three ways in which this is brought about. First, by the action of the House of Lords, which may if it chooses reject or hopelessly mutilate every single measure set up by the mechanical majority above described; secondly, by the refusal, when the majority is narrow, of a certain number of supporters to vote (independent voting is so rare as to be almost negligible); the third way (and this is a very rare occurrence indeed) is the straining of the dead Party System by some real issue so violent that party "discipline," as it is called, cannot stand it, and a whole flake of the mechanical supporters of the successful team breaks away and votes with the Opposition. When, by the action of the House of Lords rendering legislation impossible or by a snap vote (the second method) or by a break in the Party System (the third and exceedingly rare case), a

Government is in a minority even of one, an appeal must once more be made to the electors, a party cry is once more chosen upon either side, and the game begins all over again.

The outstanding feature of the Party System, from the point of view of the representative theory, is that it is a direct negation of that theory. It has many other features, pleasant and unpleasant; it is comic, it is charlatan, it is corrupt, and sometimes, though not often, it is dangerous to the State: but so far as a Democrat who really believes in representation is concerned, its chief feature is that it destroys representation. It is common enough to hear some old gentleman pleading plaintively in the House of Commons to be allowed to vote as his conscience dictates. He begs the Government to "take off the Whips" on that particular division, but by the very method of his pleading he admits that it will be his first business to obey the orders of his half of the Front Benches and not the known desires of his constituents.

That is the Party System.

Now the first question which a man unacquainted with this sport would ask when he first came across it would be, "How is this 'party discipline' maintained?" For, after all, if people in Parliament acted as human beings ordinarily act, that is, did what they thought best, spoke as their convictions prompted them, and in particular fulfilled the obligations they had undertaken, it is evident that the system would break down in the first day of a new session; majorities would differ, particular proposals of the Government would be rejected, others would be accepted by small majorities, others by large ones; many now bitterly contested would be unanimously accepted. As a fact the system does mechanically and rigidly fulfil its intentions, and not those of the electorate. Men do not attempt to represent those who send them to the representative assembly, and even the fear of losing their seats if they go too far in their divergence from their constituents weighs less with them than the fear of disobeying the orders proceeding from their Front Bench. Why is this?

The rigidity of the Party System is achieved by the coalition of a number of forces which I shall now describe.

(1) The Executive of the Day has the power of promotion in the legal profession and it is by the faithful and blind acceptance of everything proposed by one's leaders that the great salaried prizes of the legal profession are chiefly obtained. The first business of a successful lawyer is to enter Parliament and vote under the direction of his Front Bench. To do this corresponds

in English legal life to ability in strategy, tactics or organisation in military life; to becoming fashionable in the profession of an artist or a writer; to good cooking in the profession of a *chef*. The lawyers, who are always the largest single profession in Parliament, and who are the basis of the whole system, are immovable in their adherence to the Party System, for upon it depend their careers.

(2) Men of ability in advocacy, or possessed of any other of the factors of party success which I have named, have within their reach very considerable prizes in power, honours, and salaries if they back up their team, and conversely are quite certain of getting none if they do not. This applies not only to honours, power, and money obtainable directly as members of Parliament, but also to places and jobs which can always be found for them if they prove unsuccessful at the next election.

(3) The average cost of an election is, first and last, and counting everything, about £1000. Taking the community as a whole, there are not many men who can afford a thousand pounds even for what may seem to them necessary. There are very few who can afford it for a luxury. And even those who can afford it for the luxury of a seat in Parliament hesitate to risk so large a sum where the chances of a return are indeterminate. There has, therefore, grown up a habit of paying election expenses largely or in part out of secret funds controlled by the officials of either team. Subscriptions are made to these funds, to some extent they are sent by men honestly enamoured of the policy, serious or the reverse, which a particular party has adopted; but to a much larger extent they proceed from men who expect in return two things: first, honours (and notably peerages), secondly, a power of influencing the action of the Executive. They are rarely disappointed in either of these expectations. Now it is very difficult for a man who has enjoyed this form of generosity to deny the return which is expected of him. The present writer has some acquaintance with that difficulty. And a man who has had his election expenses paid in part or altogether out of the secret party funds must be in some extent bound by the Party System.

(4) An existing Government can always threaten its supporters with a General Election if it fails to obtain a majority. For instance, at the moment these lines are written one section of the professional politicians upon what is called the "Liberal" side propose to shirk the question of the House of Lords and to bury it in a complicated and long-drawn-out political discussion. The almost unanimous opinion upon their side of the House is

against this policy, but the argument used for doing what so many men are virtually pledged not to do is that if an adverse vote be cast another General Election, with its immense cost in energy and money, will be imposed as a sort of fine and penalty for their disobedience.

(5) The rules of the House are such that very few propositions, not connected with the Party System, very few, that is, which the two teams have not agreed to regard as part of the game, can be brought forward at all; and even to divide the House in a way which neither one team nor the other desires is impossible, or at least so difficult that nothing but a very careful study of a vast number of complicated rules, coupled with the best of good luck in the way of time and the attendance of members, makes it possible to do so. Thus there was no division enforcing the public will in the matter of Chinese labour in the last Parliament, nor was there any clear division upon the question of the sale and purchase of peerages, because both Front Benches were agreed that both these questions should, in the interests of the party politician, be stifled.

(6) All initiative resides with the two teams in question and especially with the team which won the game at the last election. And a member of the House of Commons finding that he is deprived of initiative, that no proposal of his can have any effect upon legislation and that he is powerless for any positive work, is the more ready to regard himself as a voting machine since he cannot regard himself as a man capable of carrying his mandate into effect.

(7) More vague, but perhaps more important than any of the preceding, is the illusion produced by the play upon the *audience*.

The electorate of England runs, in the matter of this illusion, through a whole range of degrees, from the ordinary professional man in London (who knows all about the Party System and regards it with a complete, though usually tolerant, contempt as humbug from beginning to end) to the honest but isolated provincial farmer or shopkeeper who is sincerely convinced that the one team is composed of good men fulfilling the intentions of their Maker, and the other of Demons. Nay, there is even a proportion (though how large it is difficult to say) who regard the one team and the other as standing for certain fixed and definable principles, and as representing two adverse philosophies; this illusion is chiefly produced in the very young, and is discoverable in the youth even of the wealthiest classes of the community. Now though the degrees of this illusion are various, and though an increasing number of men smile at or despise the

Party System, yet it must be conceded that the effect of any play upon its audience is always considerable. Perhaps some who read these lines will, like the writer of them, have recently passed through an electoral contest; if so he will be amused to remember how interested he got in the party cries and the party nonsense. It was like watching a good game of poker; one could not help taking sides to some extent even though one heard one man describing the Lords as a mass of blood-thristy ruffians and another solemnly assuring great gatherings that his own first cousin or his brother-in-law was a man of the vilest turpitude. I say this force, the force which makes a man vote "Tory" or "Liberal" without much caring for the spurious policies put forward, is, though the vaguest, the strongest force of all the forces that support the Party System. And if a great war or some other drastic medicine of the Almighty should compel us hurriedly to abandon its absurdities, some proportion of the electorate would still be found—it is impossible to say what proportion—asking bewilderedly which side was "Unionist" and which side "Radical"; and until they could get some answer to that all-important question many a voter would, even in a national crisis, not know how to vote. On this account it has always seemed to me very important that the colours of the two parties should be standardised. At present there is some confusion; and a man who is in the habit of voting blue, and who is possessed of more than one vote, may give it to the Liberal in one constituency, to the Conservative in another.

It may here be asked with some justice (and the greater part of educated Englishmen do so ask themselves), "After all, what is the harm of it? The Government of the country continues, and it is efficiently carried on; the little clique which separates itself into the two teams is composed for the most part of very distinguished and very able men; they have behind them (when the fortunes of the game have given one or the other of them office) a large number of highly trained, experienced and carefully chosen permanent officials. They are patriotic men, as are almost invariably the members of an oligarchy, and they will not allow their pastime, lucrative and absorbing as it is, very gravely to interfere with the prime necessities of the nation." Why then should one complain?

The first and most serious complaint against the Party System is that it is making a lie absolute. This is not so abstract nor so vain a matter as some of our contemporaries may suppose. Leonardo da Vinci very well said that the chief fault, the capital lesion, in life and in the service of God was anything like a fixed

and permanent falsehood. One cannot with impunity pretend that a lion is a sheep or that arsenic is bread. And though the consequences of a fixed and obdurate lie in the national life are not as immediately evident as the same habit would be in domestic life, yet an ultimate consequence of disaster always does attach to deliberate and maintained falsehood in any department of human energy. When the leader of the Opposition (whoever he may be for the time) strikes the empty box upon the Treasury Bench and professes his inability to conceive the iniquity of his opponent—with whom he has just had dinner and whom perhaps he calls by his Christian name—the thing has a comic, and therefore a harmless aspect; but it also deceives and is intended to deceive great masses of men. Mystical as the doctrine may sound, it is none the less true (and the consciences of all men bear witness to it), that falsehood, tolerable and almost unconscious when it is sporadic, negligible when it is the result of violence or of strong affection, not necessarily disastrous even when it is the result of private avarice and spite, is fatal when it strikes root and is erected into the dignity of a system. I will not, however, labour this point for it is religious and is, therefore, not susceptible of positive proof. To some charlatanry is odious, to others amusing. I know not in which aspect it gives me personally the strongest emotion.

There are three more immediate and direct ways in which the Party System can be proved dangerous. It promotes useless legislation, it permits bad legislation, and it renders impossible good legislation upon which all men are at heart agreed.

It promotes bad legislation because it is in the essence of the Party System to invent a cry. And that cry must of its nature not touch any very serious or very real issue; for if it did the pack of cards would come tumbling down. Whatever your reforms, whether seriously proposed or not, they must not touch that world of good dinners and first cousins upon which the Party System reposes. You must have a cry and it must be a cry upon which people are to get excited and it must be continually renewed. The result is a mass of legislation most of it quite empty and hollow and useless, diverting and corrupting the political conscience of the people.

It permits bad legislation: for when a proposed piece of legislation has *not* been made a party business, it passes as automatically and as much of necessity as the most wanton caprice of the most absolute despot. A little measure is introduced which brings in some tyrannical abomination into the lives of the poor, to inspect this or that or to torture them in this or

that more drastic fashion if they offend the rich. Such a measure has but to get the support of a crank in one of the two teams, to be allowed its little discussion by the other team (as a thing beneath notice), and nothing on earth can prevent its becoming law. If any one doubts what I say, let him read the Crimes Prevention Bill, with its monstrous original provisions for lifelong imprisonment at the discretion of a man's gaolers. Not one man in a thousand in England would have tolerated such a proposal if it had been made a first-class Government measure. Under the Party System it was impossible to find tellers against it.

Finally, the Party System prevents good legislation. Thus all men are not agreed whether Ireland should be governed by an efficient foreign bureaucracy or by a native Government. But there is not one man of experience who is not thoroughly sickened by the complete breakdown of decent government in that country. It is a shocking thing, it is a byword throughout Europe, and we have for our pains a ruined province, the hatred of a very powerful and widely distributed military race, and the hearty contempt of our rivals upon the Continent. There is not one thoughtful man who does not wish to see things changed, and now that the moneylenders have their security under the last Land Act the only obstacle to change is the inheritance of a few old party cries. Seeds sown in a merely party interest to secure salaries and places for certain men are now grown up into a very stubborn harvest, which bars the way of every honest reformer towards his goal in this prime department of our public life. It is exactly the same with the little education difficulty and with the big drink difficulty. It is the same with every single point of real importance in our polity. The Party System has made real action and real reform impossible.

As to whether it can be remedied or not, I have no space to discuss here, but I should imagine that like every other evil, a remedy can at least be attempted by persistent, deliberate and continued exposure of motive; and since in this particular case the evil is especially the evil of lying, by the ceaseless reiteration of the truth.

The Elections and After

By Alfred Mond, M.P.

The election that has just taken place is perfectly normal in one respect at least; it has disappointed the more ardent partisans on both sides. These invariably attribute to the country more enthusiasm for their particular cause, their pet reforms, than the ordinary elector can be induced to feel. The result in the present case, however, differs very little from the estimate of cool-headed observers. The latter remembered that the Liberal Government after four years in office had to contend against the "swing of the pendulum," which is inevitable in England; the combined opposition of the feudal forces, whose strength has been seriously underestimated by many of those who, while addressing mass meetings of artisans in industrial centres, forgot the pressure this great machine could still exercise in the country districts, whose inhabitants after all are largely dependent upon the individuals composing it for their very livelihood, and who have displayed an exceptional energy and brought forces to bear which were not always of a very creditable character; the determined resistance of their allies of the liquor trade; an exceptionally energetic and widespread Tariff Reform propaganda; the revived German Navy scare, which was sprung upon them at the last moment; together with the well-organised battalions of outvoters, who, after the fashion of a stage army—especially in the Home Counties—made an apparently imposing display of Tariff Reform strength and certainly cost the Liberals a number of seats. As a matter of fact that election, in spite of all these disadvantages, has provided the Liberal Prime Minister with a majority, the possession of which would have highly pleased most of his predecessors here and all his colleagues in other countries. Indeed, monster majorities, such as the unprecedented one of 1906, have always been rare and more or less accidental in this country. They represent but temporary phases of public feeling, and not the settled views of the nation. No one who has studied the question from a statistical standpoint can fail to realise that on the whole

the conflicting political views of the population of Great Britain are more evenly balanced than is commonly recognised.

In summing up the present position it will be well to give first the state of parties at the dissolution. They then stood as follows:

Liberals	373
Labour party	46
Nationalists	83
Ministerialists	502
Tory-Tariff Reform Opposition	168
Ministerial majority	334

Their present position is:

Liberals	275
Labour members	40
Nationalists	82
Ministerialists	397
Tory-Tariff Reform Opposition	273
Ministerial majority	124

By excluding Ireland, as the Tory-Tariff Reformers illogically try to do, and consequently deducting also the twenty-one Irish Unionist votes from the Opposition, the state of parties in Great Britain alone is:

Liberals	273
Labour	40
Nationalists	1
Ministerialists	314
Tory-Tariff Reform Opposition	252
Ministerial majority	62

Although the Ministerialists are in a minority of thirteen in England alone, even there, according to trustworthy calculations, they, with a smaller representation, polled nearly 69,000 more votes than their Tory-Tariff opponents. The four constituencies lost in three-cornered fights in England—Manchester, Burnley, Cockermouth, and Bow and Bromley—further reduced the Liberal representation in England proper, while the loss

of two further Progressive seats through the split made the total for Great Britain six, counting twelve on a division.

A calculation based on the swing of the pendulum alone would of itself account for a larger diminution of the Liberal vote than has actually taken place. The Progressive majority of 1906, composed of Liberals, Nationalists, and Labour members, was the largest ever recorded since the election under the Reform Bill in 1832 (300), amounting as it did to 356 against the combined forces of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists. The previous Conservative and Unionist majority at the General Election of 1900 was 134, while that of 1895 showed the high-water mark of modern Toryism at the polls with a majority of 152. The fourth Gladstone Ministry from 1892–94 came in with a majority of no more than 40. In the General Elections of 1880 and 1885 the Liberal majority was 176 and 170, which majority was changed in the following year by the coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists to a minority of 118. From 1874 to 1880 the Conservatives held office with a majority of only 52, which is 10 less than the majority now held by the present Government in the constituencies in Great Britain alone.

Between 1880 and the Parliament elected after the Reform Bill in 1832, there was not a single instance of such a high majority on either side as the victories of 1880 and 1885, to say nothing of the overwhelming defeat inflicted upon Tory-Tariff Reformers in 1906.

Another point to be remembered in these calculations is that there is no justification for the attempt to represent the adhesion to the Labour party of the Liberal representatives of the miners as a real loss to Liberalism. The present Opposition has no inducement to offer to the representatives of the working classes of England sufficient to detach them from the common cause of democratic reform and the defence of representative institutions. The elections have, as a matter of fact, taught the Labour members the necessity of working hand in hand with the Liberals, the frank adoption of whose policy, as set forth in the Budget, alone saved them from still greater losses at the polls.

Altogether the Government has a majority of votes as well as of Members of Parliament, not only in the United Kingdom but in England proper, thus completely destroying the extraordinary contention seized upon by the Tariff Reformers in their desperation, that only an English majority, in the narrowest sense of the word, is entitled to decide constitutional questions in the British Parliament. No better illustration could be

found of the lengths to which Tariff Reformers are prepared to go in misleading public opinion than the fact that they, who pride themselves upon being Imperialists devoted to the unity of the Empire and to the representation of all its component parts in a still greater Central Parliament, should draw invidious distinctions between the voters of England proper and those of Scotland and Wales—as part of the mere Celtic fringe—and of the Irish voters whom they at one moment represent as irreconcilably rebellious and at another as possible allies of neo-Protectionism. Nothing could more clearly show their complete absence of principle than the fact that while they urge that Ireland ought to have no voice in the settlement of a constitutional question, they are straining every nerve to detach the Irish members from the Liberal party in order, with the help of their vote, to impose protection upon the people of Great Britain.

It is hardly necessary, however, to point out that while mainly agricultural Ireland has little or nothing to gain and much to lose from the protection of British manufactures, she is vitally interested in the constitution under which she lives and which affects her quite as much as it does England. If the Irish are not entitled to have a voice in constitutional questions which vitally affect them, how can they be justified in casting their votes in favour of a Tariff Reform affecting British manufactures in which they are much less interested? Here it may be well to call attention to a characteristic blunder of the Tariff Reformers in setting their trap in presence of the wary Irish bird. They are confident that the bulk of the Irish people are Protectionist in sympathy, but they appear to be unaware of the fact that the protection desired by Ireland is against English manufacturers, and that an Imperial Protection which would enable those manufacturers to charge still higher prices than at present would not at all serve her purpose. Ireland desires to create an independent industry and would like to follow the example of the Hungarians who, with a similar object in view, hamper Austrian imports as far as lies in their power. The only kind of Tariff Reform desired by the Irish people would be the erection of a Tariff wall against England—and that they clearly recognise the Tory-Protectionist coalition is as little likely to grant them as is the Liberal Free Trade majority.

Of course the result of the last election emphasises a certain extension of the Group System in the House of Commons, where it has, however, always existed to a much larger extent than has been generally recognised. To prove that this system is no

novelty in the British Parliament, it is only necessary to recall the coalition of Whigs and Tories under Sir Robert Peel, which established and maintained Free Trade, that between the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists in 1886 to defeat Home Rule, the Liberal and Irish coalition in the years 1892–95, and that existing since 1902 up to the present day between the older Conservatives and the Tariff Reformers. As a matter of fact the Opposition party, of which Mr. Balfour is the official head and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain the real leader, is at the present moment in every sense more heterogeneous than that of the Liberals and their Labour and Irish allies.

The question of the veto of the House of Lords has been formally placed before the electors, and the majority of over a hundred and twenty in favour of making the House of Commons supreme is one which cannot be disregarded either by the Government or the Opposition. In fact the most significant feature of the situation is the pathetic appeals now addressed to the Prime Minister by the newspapers and spokesmen of the Conservative party to disregard the victory won by his policy and to join with them in some vague schemes for the reform of the House of Lords. The Lords challenged the Commons to battle at the last election. There can be no doubt as to the result nor for whom the verdict of the country was given, notwithstanding all the ingenious calculations of the defeated party who would fain try to convince themselves and others that they were the victors. The question submitted to the country was not whether the House of Lords should be doctored and turned into an assembly of superior persons, whose political acumen would often be in an inverse ratio to their eminence in other departments of life, but whether the people of this country were anxious to govern themselves or wished to continue to be governed by a number of gentlemen whose merits were of a varied character but whose qualifications were similar. A large majority of the electors decided that they had more confidence in the men whom they could control by means of popular election than in those over whom they have no control whatever. This may surprise those whose ideal for constitutions appears to be the creation of a machine which would make it as difficult as possible to get anything done at all, and who overlook the very elementary fact that in every other department of life except legislation we are moving to-day at a much more rapid rate than that of our grandfathers. These good people have failed to notice that our legislation is far behind our social development, a condition of affairs not exempt from danger

for a modern State. The people of this country have not found that Governments and Houses of Commons are subject to fits of mental aberration or are apt to propose legislation of such a character as does not meet with the approval of, at any rate, a very large proportion of the electorate, if not always the majority. They have not been accustomed either in our times or in the past to send many wild extremists to the House of Commons. The most significant feature of the last election was the downfall of men of extreme views of almost all parties. The Socialist bogey has certainly received no countenance from the votes cast at that election. It is a fact of great significance that of all parties the Labour party, and more especially the Socialist wing of it, has done worst at the election. Were it not for the accession of the miners' representatives who in the last Parliament formed part of the Liberal party, and for the additional fact that the Liberal vote was cast overwhelmingly for the other Labour representation members who were returned, this party would have almost ceased to exist. This point should be considered by those who regard the President of the Labour group as likely to be a serious embarrassment to the Liberal Government. The idea therefore that the Socialist party may become a danger in the House of Commons, which should be guarded against by limiting as much as possible the power of the Lower Chamber, may be dismissed as having no practical justification. This being the situation it is obvious that the policy of making the House of Commons the final arbiter in disputes with the House of Lords, or with any other Second Chamber that may take its place, is that favoured by the majority of the electorate.

The new House of Commons has now before it two problems that urgently call for solution: first, the relations between the two branches of the British Legislature, and, secondly, the Constitution of a reformed Second Chamber. A great deal of obscurity has been introduced into this discussion by the manner in which these two problems have been confounded. It is only right to recall, what so many now appear to ignore, namely, that the present conflict is no new feature in our Parliamentary history. Serious friction, or temporary deadlocks between Liberal Governments and the Lords, have been the rule for nearly a quarter of a century. It is the unusually long period during which the Liberal party has been out of office that has postponed the present acute phase of a chronic evil. Indeed it is very largely the paralysis caused by the crippling action of the Lords which has excluded them

from office so long. Similar difficulties to those which are encountered by the Liberal Government arose in 1880–82 and in 1892–95. It may almost be laid down as an axiom that a conflict between a Liberal Government and the House of Lords is inevitable every three years.

The Constitutions of many countries contain provisions defining the relations of the two Houses and the steps to be taken in case of disagreement between them. These mainly follow the lines of conferences of Joint Committees, a practice which was not infrequently resorted to in this country in past centuries, and which the Campbell-Bannerman resolutions proposed to revive. But a few, however, carry the question beyond the conference stage, after which some system of joint voting appears to be the usual solution of the difficulty. In reality it is an undeniable fact that in all two-Chamber systems one Chamber must ultimately become the predominant partner, however carefully that predominance may be disguised. The House of Commons has throughout the struggles of centuries acquired this preponderance, which has only recently been seriously challenged by the rejection of the last Finance Bill. Any method for the solution of this problem in the United Kingdom must strengthen and emphasise this position of the popular Chamber. The machinery proposed by the Campbell-Bannerman resolutions, defective as it undoubtedly is to some extent in being both cumbrous for its object and in omitting to provide in any way against the assumption by an insignificant majority of the House of Commons on a division of the power of final decision —the latter a defect which can easily be remedied—still points in the right direction by enabling the initiating Chamber, after hearing and considering the criticisms of the second or revising Chamber, to adhere to its proposals, being only compelled to accept such modifications as a majority of its own members consider to be in harmony with them.

A noteworthy feature of the present situation is that the Tory-Tariff Reform Opposition has now begun to recognise how urgent it is to find a remedy for the existing state of affairs, and to bring the House of Lords more into harmony with the general political development of the country. How far this conversion is due to the manner in which the electors received the incursion of the Lords into the sphere of finance is a question which may be left for future historians to answer when they deal with the extraordinary transformation of the older type of British Conservative under the formative hands of the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain and his hustling myrmidons.

Fortunately out of the confusion of voices that are now heard discussing this problem certain points of agreement are daily becoming clearer. For instance, no one of any weight any longer contends that it will be possible to maintain intact the purely hereditary principle or doubts that the reconstruction of the Lords must be at least partially on elective and more representative lines. The tendency of Tariff Reformers to clutch at every chance of securing popular and particularly working-class support will evidently do much in solving this problem on Liberal and democratic lines, while the desire to "dish the Whigs" and the fear of being thrown over by their tyrannous Tariff Reform allies promises to render the older Conservatives ready to sacrifice many of their most cherished prejudices for the sake of their party.

Indeed, so great has been the progress of the democratic ideal in both quarters that there is some talk of having representatives of Labour in the reformed Upper Chamber, where they would sit with peers who had passed through the electoral mill and in the company of Roman Catholic prelates, popular Methodist preachers, Colonial senators, trying to improve the "preference" accorded to their distant constituents, and—it is to be presumed—a considerable number of Irish Nationalists all engaged in the universal lobbying of a Tariff-reformed England.

When the discussion is begun on these lines by the most active section of the Opposition, it is pretty evident that the peers have reason to pray to be saved from their friends. It is not impossible that genuine friends of the Constitution on both sides may yet find it necessary to unite in the rejection of fancy solutions and sensational proposals, the object of which would simply be to recruit auxiliaries for the next assault upon the stronghold of Free Trade. Of course the question arises how far the Tariff Reform vanguard will be disposed to resist Liberal proposals concerning the Lords while themselves professing a desire to reform that Chamber practically out of existence; but however ready these new opportunists may be to play fast and loose in matters of principle, there are certain limits which their constituents will not allow them to overstep.

One thing is clear, namely, that the solution which will permanently command the bulk of British voters will neither be a reform of the Lord Rosebery type intended to strengthen the representation of a small class completely out of sympathy with the masses, by a mere weeding-out process which would in no way diminish either their will or power to hamper progress,

nor one which would give us the incoherent conglomerate that would naturally result from the efforts of monopoly-seeking demagogues to bribe separate interests at the expense of the community.

In reality there is but one practical and rational solution of this problem in a democratic country, and that is the creation of an elective Second Chamber of the character of a Senate, whose members by being made responsible to an electorate and subject to change are bound to be influenced by the current of public opinion in a manner in which neither a hereditary nor a nominated chamber could ever be. In view of the fact that such Chambers exist in most countries and that their constitution, their powers and their working can readily be studied, if the principle be once admitted its practical working out becomes merely a matter of detail.

The only justification for the House of Lords is the fact that it has existed in its present shape for a long time and that no substitute in the form of a more suitable Second Chamber has been seriously suggested. It would be worse than foolish to go to the trouble of remodelling this part of our Constitution unless the change were sufficiently thorough to bring the new Second Chamber into harmony with modern ideas. Irresponsible autocracy is the concomitant of all non-elective bodies, and no individuals or collections of individuals are able to withstand the natural tendency rather to enforce their own personal predilections and prejudices than to give effect to the consensus of the opinions of their fellow-citizens.

The Government and the Liberal party have before them a great opportunity. The country is undoubtedly desirous to get this question settled. Even among the Conservatives a rational elective Second Chamber would meet with considerable acceptance, and would in any case be found difficult, if not impossible to oppose.

This question and that of the relations of the two Chambers once out of the way, the task of Liberal statesmen, which under the present conditions has become as thankless as it is trying, would in future be simplified and normal. To those unacquainted with the interior work of the House of Commons it is almost impossible to realise the additional technical difficulties that are thrown in the way of a Liberal Government in the conduct of the business of the session by the erratic and spasmodic interventions of the House of Lords in legislation. Since these have been extended to finance it has clearly become impossible for any Liberal Government to undertake the responsibility

for the expenditure of public money, in the absence of any guarantee that it will be able to finance the same by taxation. Determination, calmness and courage are the three elements necessary to find a successful solution for the present situation. The statesman who will really bend his mind and energy to endeavouring to produce the system best adapted to the needs of the country and will ignore mere party advantages will not only deserve well of his country but will find that the path is neither so long nor so thorny as is commonly imagined.

The Month

RATTLING round the rink, the plain man on roller-skates can look back now on the elections with some amusement. The thing was done with furious decorum; the country muddled through conscientiously; never has the polling been so high; never have people thought more about an election, talked more, organised more, disputed or betted more; and never has the characteristic paradox of our public life been more sublimely indicated than in the net result, which has subordinated the greatest political issues since the Reform Bill of 1832 to the direction and control of Ireland, who is herself represented by about twice as many seats as, on her basis of population, she is entitled to. That is the plum issue of the elections, that and no other. It is as if Saxony swayed the destinies of United Germany, or Finland those of Russia. Well, these are not the days of Polonius but of polonium. Of course both parties profess Pickwickian delight—while, as a fact, Chantecler Ireland surveys the swag.

BUT to the man at the rink the business is not so simple. Before the elections he thought we were going to be invaded one Saturday afternoon while he was paying professionals to play football for him, and here is Prince Henry in London quietly dining and going to the play! He is a firm believer in his Charley B.'s, and he was told that the men behind the guns did not count at all, for there were hardly any guns to fire, and lo! immediately after the elections the *Times* comes out with columns of praise of the English Navy and we learn that the shooting of our ships has surpassed all previous records! He hears now from the city that a very good business year is expected. A few weeks back, terrified by the feudal pronunciamentos of the Dukes, threatening wholesale misery, ruin, earthquakes and what not, blasted by the anathema of paid, stereotyped, puling agents on the stump, confounded by a mushroom spate of aristocratic oratory—a few weeks ago, the

simple-minded skater made up his mind in a funk and "plumped" straight for Mr. Balfour. And immediately after the elections, almost before he has had time to square his bets, the entire Unionist party Press appears in Salome nudity with sagacious admonitions to the Peers to unrobe and reform themselves! Even the redskins and howling dervishes of the party Press have moderated their adjectives and imprecations. Of course the Upper House must be reformed. Only be gentle, good Mr. Asquith! Don't hustle the coroneted and mitred gentlemen! Who said they were not going to reform? And the very men who maintained that reform of the House of Lords would sound the knell of the British Constitution, these very men now come forward with a bewildering crop of paper proposals demanding the very thing for which the Liberals sought mandate from England and England resented; advocating the same constitutional and hereditary changes that every honest man in the country knows to be right and essential.

And even this is not all. As he rinked, the plain man knew without doubt whatever that the "horrid Radicals" were rapidly ruining the country. That he had from the whole party Press, as that only Tariff Reform and taxes on food could possibly save the Empire. That was as true an axiom as it was not to attempt an ice-skate outside edge on rollers. It was foolish to discuss a matter which was a truism, and even his wife, who had never read Mill or Brentano or any of those fellows, agreed —which was more than he and she did about the suffrage. But the moment the elections were over out comes the *Times*—the great, sophisticated, Pontifical *Times*—with an article discarding the Imperial unification tariff proposals of Mr. Chamberlain, throwing down as lightly one morning as it took them up, the central, the fighting, idea of imperial unity and singleness of protective-tariff policy, telling us that the English people would never consent to taxes upon their own food, casting away, vulgarly speaking, the entire bag of tricks, like a light-fingered gentleman when he spies a policeman.

It is strange, it is wonderful, it is characteristic of paradoxical England. We prohibit the serious and splendid opera, *Salome* —we permit women to dance Salomes with Baptist heads littered about the stage, as nude as Eve, and with the same Edenic

ingenuousness. We go to the polls singing with the jolly Charley B.'s, "Britons, never, never shall be slaves," and the weary ploughman, descendant of the Ironsides and of the men who sank the Armada, is borne slavishly to the polls, like a darkey going to a cockfight in the Barbados, and votes slavishly upon a tissue of principles which the next day his own party reveals to him are no principles at all. It is not altogether a pleasing reflection. It is not altogether a dignified spectacle, this England of ours in the stress of a General Election. When one pauses to think of the loathsome stream of lies which swamped the country, the grotesque fee-faw-fum of the whole business, the sordid unworthiness, dishonesty, vulgarity of the procedure, well may the honest man sympathise with Lord Rosebery's tribute to the non-party virility of Mr. Harold Cox, who, because he was an honest man and spoke as a free-born Englishman, was submerged by the party scoriæ.

"How did you win your seat, Sir Alfred," one questions the victorious candidate for Milkshire. "Oh, Tariff Reform, rammed it down them. German scare and motors," is the jocund reply. "And you?" one asks of another. "Me—motors, organisation, plural voting," is the answer. You tap a Liberal on his defeat. "No motors," he responds dryly, "intimidation, district organisation, and outvoters." And so the tale continues. Motors, intimidation, organisation, outvoters, public-houses, paid party agents, &c.—such are the agencies which win General Elections in the twentieth century in England. Hardly a man who has been on the hustings has any other story to narrate, except the fortunate holders of "safe seats." See how all the Tariff-Reform victories at the by-elections, including the champion dumper Dumphreys, evaporated when the Unionist party organisation as a whole was engaged and could not concentrate on any one spot. Think of the motor rides, the spectacle of redoubtable John Bull driven to the poll in his lordship's 60-h.p. Mercedes, with free drinks here and a luncheon there, when it is a penal offence to pay so much as a man's penny railway fare! Think of John Hampden contemplating this modern motor-car traffic, this grand electioneering holiday "wet," this sending for labourer Jenkins, thirty miles distant, to bring him to the polls, as if the Englishman of to-day was a brainless invertebrate, incapable of belief as action! They do these things better in Germany.

No German workman votes Conservative because the Herr Graf offers him a ten-mile ride in his motor-car. No Graf in Germany would venture to propose it. The German is of independent stuff. As well ask him to stop building ships as offer him a ride to the polls in a car. There the intimidation is on the other side. It is the masses who organise intimidation in Germany, but of the evils of intimidation the German form is infinitely the more dignified and honourable. There are no cars packed with hempen louts driven like sheep to the polls there. You will not see cars flying about placarded "Vote for Daddy, he's so nice." The dimples and flaxen curls of his lordship's children play no part in a German election, nor do his lordship's flunkeys, his beer, or his lady friends have the smallest influence upon the electorate.

THAT is a healthy sign, because it is a sign of independence and vitality. But the pantaloonery of our English electioneering procedure is a national disgrace. This is no party matter. It is a question which any Liberal Government should at once take up. The essentials of electioneering reform are patently these:

(1) One man one vote.

(2) All elections, both borough and county, throughout the Kingdom to be held on one day.

(3) The provision of conveyances for the carriage of voters to and from the poll to be prohibited.

(4) All public-houses to be closed on polling-day.

(5) The provisions of the Corrupt Practices Act with regard to intimidation to be amplified and made far more stringent.

Until this reform is made law, our elections will continue to be characterised by demoralising and degrading practices. The intimidation in the counties of England was little short of a scandal. All over the country effigies of the Chancellor were affixed to village public-houses, paraded about the streets and sententiously burnt. Under the organisation of the necessitous dukes, lords, and local squirearchy, the Church and the professional party agent, a spirit of "Maffick" was generated, aided by free drinks and the party tom-tom. Ladies who had never seen a *Dreadnought* in their lives gravely descanted to the people about the disastrous condition of the Navy, as if the Naval Board were non-existent and every mother's son of them

deserved keel-hauling. Staunch Liberals did not venture to appear in the streets with the Liberal colours, unless they were clever with their fists. The British bumpkin felt that the secrecy of the vote was not safe, felt that he was spied upon, flouted by the potman across the bar, earmarked and singled out for discharge if he voted Liberal, and followed the flunkey to the poll, like a Russian moujik. A very inquisition lay over the land, and the tillers of it repudiated the earth and drowned their consciences with beer.

This is no hyperbole, it is just one of our splendid insular paradoxes. If it is true that absence of faith among politicians is the cause of the growing rigidity of the party system—an evil which is only another sign of the continental hysteria infecting the staid and solid Briton—it is no less true that the popular tendency is to regard the elections much as the country treats horse-racing—as a good sport for stakes. What conceivable value has the Corrupt Practices Act if flying columns of outvoters can be organised and dumped down from place to place, and laggards and the much petted silent voter can be nursed and driven miles across the country with free drinks to encourage him! But then precedent rules England, though lawyers like to think it is authority, and so because motors are a new thing and the Act is an old thing the useless provisos obtain, though they are as antiquated as the hereditary principle itself.

It is really a very interesting phenomenon, the venal, unbusiness-like, harum-scarum way we run our General Elections. Not a man in the House of Commons, who would not, if he dare, consign the whole Irish party to the slime at the bottom of the Thames; but no politician ventures to reduce the Irish representation to its rightful number, and so the politics of Empire go on at the mercy of unconscionable Ireland. The Germans, whom many of us still regard as quasi-provincial savages, possess what we, with all our Magna Chartas, Montmorencys, Cromwells, Nelsons, and Gladstone Leagues, have not—a simple, honest electoral apparatus. Less than one-half of the adult male population in this kingdom do the voting for the Mother of all Parliaments, whereas in down-trodden, old-fashioned, pipe-clay Germany every male of twenty-five years is able to record his suffrage. This question is quite as important as any of the

grand reforms and reformations contemplated. Indeed it is the *a priori* condition of all serious reform and reformation. It is the first thing Mr. Asquith should lay before the Lords, and the Liberals should not rest until they had convinced Englishmen that every adult male in the kingdom should be entitled to a vote and to use it as proudly and independently as an Elizabethan used his sword.

And now—well, our plain friend sees England and the future of the mightiest and cleanest Empire known to the world quivering before the frown of Mr. Redmond. None the less one thing is perfectly clear, and that is that despite every effort made to obscure the real issue during the elections, despite every effort on the one side to pooh-pooh it and on the other to evade it, the question of the Lords remains for Liberals, remains for the people the true fighting issue, *de facto* the sole issue before the country. It is not, correctly speaking, a question of party or partisanship—though the Lords have made it so—of personal politics or political personality, or politics at all, but of the life machinery of constitutional Government. And the dervishes and party drill-sergeants know it. They know, as every thinking man in England knows, that a purely hereditary House is an anachronism, holding good as a tradition rather than as an effective, viewed and tolerated generally, much as the modern chauffeur views and tolerates the now obsolescent cab-horse. When men are learning to fly it is idle to talk to them of the hereditary principle. Its very idea is wingless. Its panache and cognisance have gone. "Laddered" are the silken stockings of the Lords. As an institution, it has forfeited its reason of state. And it has forfeited it because its pulse is atrophied and is no longer felt by the people.

For some years now it has been not only an adjunct, but the live axle of the Conservative party, entirely amenable to the ruling of the leader in the Lower House, entirely a Conservative force—Conservative in the party sense—hostile and negative to all Liberal democratic legislation. It has arrogated to itself the privilege of class government with plenary power to dictate to any Liberal government, even on questions of finance. As the democratic spirit of the age advanced, it has shrunk more and more into an effete and hide-bound class Conservatism, into a cave dominated by the Conservative Party Whip, into the sequacious directory of Mr. Balfour. So long as the question

of the land in England remained untackled, the Lords knew that they were safe, for the land is the great question of this country. But the moment a man came forward bold enough and with the necessary power behind him to raise the problem, then the nigger was in the fire at once. At once class was opposed to class, interest to interest, age to youth, and now the minimum of beneficent tolerance has been reached, principle is opposed to tradition, and the martial Chancellor and constitutionalism stand arrayed under the banner of the democratic idea against snobbery and the hereditary principle.

The Lords have willed it so. They took the frontal offensive, they must now bear the consequences. It has thus become a class matter, the most powerful of all political forces. Against them stands the spirit of individualism, of scientific progress and reform, which is the cry and spirit of the age. It was extremely silly of them, no doubt. They must know what is happening in Russia to-day. Even in Persia something of the same kind is taking place. Only the other day the Sultan of Turkey was driven from the throne. Its expression in Germany is counted by over three millions of voters, and its power is growing continually. In France the Royalist party no longer even counts. Can we in England expect alone to defy it? Shall we, who once cut off the head of a king, go chicken-livered at a class injunction? It is not to be considered. Lord Rosebery made a capital mistake in attacking the Budget if he did not intend to vote against it; but in advising the Lords not to throw it out, or submit it to the people, he acted true to his finer historical judgment: presciently, honourably. It is not now the question whether Mr. Lloyd-George's Budget is a good one or a bad one, whether one is a Tariff Reformer or a Free Trader, a well-brought-up Liberal or Conservative. The sole question resolves itself into this: Is Liberalism when it is returned to power in the Commons, to have free and fair play according to the unwritten laws of the Constitution, or is the will of an hereditary class Upper House, no longer true to its own principles, to its own beliefs, to its own judgment, to be supreme and inviolate in their island. That is virtually the sole question at present before the country. It cannot now be burked, for it is the integral part of the problem of the land which is the dominant in the whole modern democratic idea. They stand together indissolubly, a constituent whole. The problem of the Lords and of the hereditary principle is the question of the

land to which they belong, and the one is the solution of the other.

THEORETICALLY, no one disputes the urgency of reform. For years Lord Rosebery has advocated it. Dozens of Peers admit it, and, now that the elections are over, the very redskins of the Unionist Press propose it. In its national aspect it in no way impairs the authority of the crown, which is vested in the symbol of the flag. There need be no animus about the concern. Indeed, its concern is in part its unconcern, and that is really the trouble. For no man quite knows, not Mr. Balfour nor Mr. Asquith, how much or how little of a revolution the deed of reform implies. We take our games grimly in this country, we take our duties lightly. The great problem before Mr. Asquith is not so much the question of what Bill or measure is to be formulated, but the measure of the force behind him. It is a long while since we had anything in the shape of a revolution in this country. We affect to have risen superior to trial by force, just as we discarded duelling for sensational law-suits. The trouble is not what is to be done but exactly how to do it. The puzzle for the Prime Minister is the primary diagnosis of the case—to discover, in a word, whether the agencies which he has conjured up and which threaten to submerge him are essentially those of evolution or revolution.

As the spirit of negation the hereditary Upper House must now "walk the plank" of failure. So much is a truism. The question is whether Peter Pan has grown up or not. He is young, he is ardent, he is a Liberal, and he has just come down from Oxford with the *New Age* in his tail-pocket. He looks at the Lords and he thinks, as Napoleon said of Goethe, "let him go, he has grown old." The young man resents this class political censorship, as he resents bearing-reins and our stage nosebag. Grounded at the schools in Schoppenhauer, he knows that a good man must have a "good stomach and a wicked heart." His brother has been sent to Heidelberg because he could not learn anything at Eton, and his sister is a Suffragette. He wants to help, to fight, to build. He finds in Liberalism—faith, honesty, and constructive principle. He sees in the hereditary system—class intolerance, class senility and negation.

BEING an Englishman, of course he has the true buccaneer instinct, but the question is, has he the true buccaneer faith?

All the ingredients of evolution are present—that is patent. Both sides admit the necessity of reform, while most of the people are superbly indifferent whether the Lords are decapitated or not. What then Mr. Asquith has to decide is not so much the way to do it, but when to do it, because if it is merely evolution, then it is the form that matters, but if, on the contrary, it is revolution—revolution, however mild and British—then the moment is all, because action is the soul of battle.

On the whole the soil is fruitful, the hour propitious, and the verdict of the country has been favourable. In no true sense is there a deadlock, for the simple reason that Mr. Balfour could not take office if he were asked to. It is evident that the Food Taxers do not desire another General Election. Deduct the seats won by the naval scare, by outvoters, intimidation, motor-cars, and the flying-party organisation, and the finding of the country is pretty sound in support of Free Trade, Liberalism and democratic reform. Though the adhesion of the Lords to the land and the English workmen to the Lords is still the key of our political philosophy and the warden of the British Constitution, Yellowplush is not so pleased with his calves as he used to be and Master Peter Pan is growing up. We may still love a lord as a Frenchman loves ideas, or an American money, but many of us now love ourselves better. That the English Philistine should calmly contemplate the reconstitution of the Upper House is significant and symptomatic. It is folly to pretend that the spirit which has brought things to so great a crisis is superficial and transient, just as it is folly to attempt to rush up a jerry-built Second Chamber with half-baked revolutionary mortar. It cannot be. It will not be. But the spirit, the creative, architectural spirit is there, awaiting due invocation. The immediate financial administrative deadlock of procedure is only a matter of form and compromise; but not so the question of the Lords. Whether the veto comes first or the Budget has precedence is, after all, merely a politician's concern. It is a matter of tactics. It is a matter of Irish whisky.

Give them the whisky—delete the licence duty and whisky-tax clauses—it is always a good principle in this climate to stand a man a drink; for to Liberalism the hour is extremely critical. Failure now to assert the rights of ordinary party victory and

to curtail the veto powers of the Lords must end in disaster, in infallible destruction of Liberalism as a party. It was this failure, this incompetency of the Liberals in Germany, which destroyed Liberalism as a force and annihilated its very principle there. It sterilised because as a force, as a practical party, it proved itself impotent, and its place was taken by Socialism. And naturally so. Men are not dominated by principles and ideas, but by the expression of them. That is what the German Socialists, in turn, have discovered. These man-eaters of Social Democracy, what have they accomplished? Those men who preached, and Bebel foremost, that political power was all, economic power—the power of trades-unionism, that is—valueless, what have they achieved? Practically nothing. To-day the German Socialist party flies the banner of evolution. All down the line the so-called Revisionists have triumphed. The old Marxian shibboleths are exploded, the Blanquist revolutionary theories are grey with age. Now the Socialists have turned to trades-unionism, because economic organisation has achieved more than political organisation and party success without real expression, real power or outlet. With us, precisely the converse has taken place. We began with trades-unionism, and the men voted Tory. Lately some of us have begun to dabble with Karl Marx. A Labour party has arisen, and it has come to stay. Be there no deception as to that. That it returns to Westminster less strong numerically than before is not so much the fault of Labour as it is the virtue of Liberalism, which revived, regalvanised, fighting a strong democratic programme, took its natural place again as the champion of progress in the country and took away the Labour votes. The Liberal and Labour cause was for the nonce identical. In the House they are allies, allies in the struggle for expression. If the Liberal party now fails to express itself, fails to fight, and to achieve what it set out to rectify, its fate will be doomed, and its power will deflect to Labour. Such will be the inexorable condition of failure. To avoid collision, because it is collision, the fortuity of the polls, because it is fortuity, will lead to inevitable chaos and disruption and to the foundation of a true Labour party to which many Liberals and followers of the new democratic idea will secede. What is stirring Englishmen to-day, both Liberal and Conservative, is no epicene lip-hysteria, but a deep-set, virile conviction. Tinker with it, and it will find issue elsewhere: in a party that has virility. Lead it, and it will probably carry Mr. Asquith rough-shod over the icons of British precedent to the goal of cause and progress.

THE Liberals could safely go to the country on a sound reformatory Electoral Bill, as part of the general scheme of constitutional reform. The one is the corollary of the other; put them together, expound and lay them before the country and they will constitute a whole, a synthetic programme of constructive democratic reform to which Labour and Liberalism must subscribe. It is not Mr. Lloyd George's licence clauses which matter. What is Irish whisky to England, when most of us drink Scotch? All that part of the pother is purely political, pettifogging excrescence. At the present crisis the principle is all, the licence clauses, the whisky taxes are but the travail of controversial polemics, out of which not so much as a blind mouse will emerge with credit. What is required more than anything else is simplicity; a simple, direct, tangible scheme. As always, the end is everything. And the end is not the Budget, as to the soundness of which not a few sound Liberals disagree, but the right of the men of the Commons to direct the financial legislation of the country. What the nation wants now are *Dreadnoughts*. It wants big guns, big ships and many of them. And it wants big politics, big reforms, national values and returns.

BUT let there be no more party catch-vote alchemy with the flag, as if Englishmen were afraid of the finest possession they have. Let the Government make an honest statement about the Naval programme and place it, as all true men wish it to be placed, outside the ring of circus politics where the cracking whip of the party job-master cannot reach it. Go to the country on a Big-Navy programme—two keels to every one of Germany—and a comprehensive electoral and constitutional Reform Bill, and Liberalism will not fail. As for the Lords and the maniacs of party conservatism, they will do well to remember Canning's dictum; that if they oppose reform because it is innovation, they may get innovation instead—which may be anything but reform.

"Chantecler"

By the Count de Soissons

If by writing *Cyrano* Rostand became one of the most remarkable French dramatists, his new play *Chantecler* has made him one of the greatest dramatic poets of the world. This is due not only to the fact that all the poetic qualities of his previous work—the brilliant lyricism, the beautiful daring, the heroic fancy, and the prodigious inventiveness—are not only to be found but are magnified in this piece; neither because, as twelve years ago he, like a true magician, caused the fog and the mist brought into the French theatre from gloomy Norway to again dissipate and disappear, and reintroduced into it the Latin lucidity, restored the prestige of the drama in verse, and in doing so he continues the national tradition; nor because, following the old French *fabliaux*, the *Roman de Renard*, Rabelais's *Iste sonnante*, La Fontaine's *Fables*, and George Sand's *Diable aux champs*, he replaced men by birds, as was done in the above-mentioned works, where a large part is given to animals—but because he has given to the world the greatest symbol ever written and because of his reform—so much needed—boldly introduced into the theatre by following the footsteps of the ancient Greeks, who first created art and literature, and whose theatrical performances were the most artistic.

The theatre should be *le temple du rêve* says Maeterlinck.* Art is a temporary mask under which the faceless Unknown puzzles us. It is the substance of eternity introduced within us by means of a kind of distillation of infinity. A dramatic poem was the work of art but its performance on the stage frightened the swans, it threw the pearls into the bottomless depth. The great poems of humankind should not be put on the stage. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* should not be performed: at least it is dangerous to see them on the stage, for it is there that the masterpiece dies—the production of a dramatic poem leaving something incomplete in itself. Every master-

* *La Jeune Belgique*, 1890, No. 9, "Menus propos." Le Théâtre.

piece is a symbol, and a symbol cannot bear the active presence of man; there is a continual discord between the forces of symbol and the forces of man. A true artist wishes to rescue us by the means of his poem from the domination of senses, while man acts only on our senses, and instead of giving the preponderance to the past and the future as does a poem, he diminishes, if not destroys, that preponderance by interesting us exclusively in the moment during which he speaks, viz., in the present. As soon as man enters the stage the spectacle of a poem is interrupted, for his voice, gestures and attitude are not veiled by synthetic conditions; he oversteps the limits of a poem, for the gigantic poem of his presence overshadows everything round him and destroys the symbol. The Greeks felt that incongruousness and their masks, which seem incomprehensible to us, served to alleviate the presence of man and to ease the symbol. During the Elizabethan times the recitation was melopœian, the acting conventional, and the stage symbolic. It was more or less the same in France in the seventeenth century. Dr. Johnson entertained similar ideas in regard to the theatre and the performance of dramatic poems. In our times Maeterlinck has written some pieces to be played not by men, but by dolls.

Rostand went further. That which with Maeterlinck was only a *pium desiderium* has become an actuality with the French dramatist, who, by the power of his genius, has replaced realism —incongruous with true art—by a symbol in which the presence of man on the stage, if not altogether excluded, is veiled, so to say, for Rostand understood the unfitness of the means used in the modern theatre for producing dramatic poems; he recognised that every poetical work ought to be a dream, and that dream is possible only where the flight of imagination is not limited by too narrow boundaries, by means of which the author does not restrain his work, but leaves to the reader a free field where, beyond the proper picture, there open boundless horizons connected with it, and when the work contains a symbol clothed in a piece of infinity, if one could put it so; he has realised that the interior depth hidden at the bottom of infinity is the most important condition and the principal source of poetical beauty—besides the knowledge, proper to poets, of rendering it—and that is why he has given to the world his coruscating dramatic poem *Chantecler*. It took him seven long years of continual struggle, not only with his imperative desire for surpassing himself—*semper ad astra*—but with the whole world, so to say; he was obliged to overthrow all the difficulties accumulated for two thousand years in order to induce people to remember that

we cannot improve upon the ancient Greeks but must look back to them for guidance in literary and artistic matters. These are the fundamental reasons which make *Chantecler* perhaps the greatest poetical fancy ever written and performed.

It begins like the ancient Athenian plays by a masterly and inimitable prologue—a piece of unmistakable poetry—in which the spectators are told that as it is a Sunday, the farmer and his family will all go to church and in the farmyard there will remain only the birds and the animals, who will tell frankly all that is in their hearts. While the πρόλογος recites his lines one hears behind the curtain horses stamping, carts rumbling, bells ringing, fowls cackling; it is a kind of charming rustic symphony. The curtain rises and reveals an ideal farmyard, because everything is unusually and intentionally large, much larger than in reality. A gigantic blackbird sneers in a cage, gigantic hens cluck, a gigantic dog growls, a gigantic tom-cat purrs, and presently a gigantic cock, the master of the place, appears. He makes the impression of a mediæval knight covered with armour and *fièrement casqué* for combat. Chantecler is his name; he is the principal character and hero of the poem; he is very good-looking, he is brave, he is fond of order and lucidity—two principal characteristics of the French genius, and that is why the cock is the emblem of the French nation; he speaks with the authority of government and every morning he makes the sun rise by his singing—at least he firmly and honestly believes he does so. The hens believe him and in him, which, however, does not prevent them from being curious as to the secret of his power. The Blackbird, doubting everything, says:

"Il est tellement beau qu'il semble avoir raison."

Chantecler ascends the wall and, being intoxicated with the light and heat, sings an ode to the sun, a masterpiece of such high poetical merit, on account of its clever measure, in which octosyllables are alternated with alexandrines, that it will be looked upon as one of the most beautiful poems in French literature, as can be judged by the following stanzas:

Je t'adore! Soleil! ô toi dont la lumière,
Pour bénir chaque front et mûrir chaque miel,
Entrant dans chaque fleur et dans chaque chaumière,
Se divise et demeure entière
Ainsi que l'amour maternel!

Gloire à toi sur les près! Gloire à toi dans les vignes!
Soit bénit parmis l'herbe et contre les portails!
Dans les yeux des lézardes et sur l'aile des cygnes!
O toi qui fait les grandes lignes
Et qui fait les petits détailes!

Je t'adore le Soleil ! Tu mets dans l'air des roses,
Des fleures dans la source, un dieu dans le buisson !
Tu prends un arbre obscure et tu l'apothéose !
O Soleil ! tois sans qui les choses
Ne seraient que ce qu'elles sont !

The hens flutter, they listen to Chantecler and admire not so much his song as himself; they also fear him a little, for although good he is a stern master watching over their work, to which he presently sends them, and remains with his good friend the dog Patau, in whom is personified the respect for authority and hierarchy. There remains also his adversary the Blackbird, who sneers at Chantecler's frankness and enthusiasm, as in life do frivolous, envious, creeping, and low-minded people at those who are superior to them; the Blackbird is ready to make an alliance against Chantecler with snobbery, represented by the Peacock, and with social narrow-mindedness, personified in the Guinea-fowl. The dog warns his friend against the danger, but even his sagacity could not foresee the peril threatening Chantecler by a stormy passion. The detonation of a firearm interrupts their friendly commerce; a beautiful Hen-pheasant falls from a tree into the farmyard; she is not wounded, only frightened; a setter appears on the wall but is at once called back by the whistling of his master. The Hen-pheasant represents the charm of *l'éternel feminin*, irresistible on account of graceful shape and resplendent attire; as she lives in a forest there is also about her the attractiveness of mystery, and the peril of independence. The meeting of Chantecler and the Hen-pheasant originates a highly interesting conversation about different ideals of life that entertain the beautiful adventuress and the domesticated bird. She implores the chivalrous cock to protect her against the hunter and—notwithstanding that it is difficult to hide a rainbow, as he puts it—he decides that she shall be concealed in Patau's kennel. Chantecler, conscious of his conquering powers, struts haughtily round her, while she looks at him with curiosity, mingled with a slight contempt for the good-looking churl. However, she accepts his hospitality and the night falls. The nocturnal birds come out from their hiding-places and make a conjuration against Chantecler, whom they all hate because he causes the rise of the sun so distasteful to them. The Hen-pheasant overhears the conjuration and her female heart begins to beat for Chantecler because he is in peril.

In the second act, full of Shakespearean poetry, the course of the plot is fixed. The Guinea-fowl is going to give an "At Home" next day at five o'clock; amongst her guests there will be a

bravado cock who will challenge Chantecler to a single fight and kill him. The nocturnal birds are satisfied with their tenebrous work and they chant a hymn to the night that rivals by its beauty the incantation to the sun. Dawn comes; the night birds disappear, the crowing of a cock resounds and the sun rises. Chantecler, accompanied by the Hen-pheasant, appears on the outskirts of the forest where he is wont to come every morning to sing. It is the first time that he is not alone, and as his *inamorata* wishes to receive the homage of dawn he promises her to sing as he never sang before, and to make the day more splendid than ever. The Hen-pheasant takes advantage of her lover's expansiveness and being inquisitive, asks him—like another Delilah—to reveal to her the secret of his power. There is nothing now that he could refuse her, and he says that before singing he scratches deeply the earth, and for a while is as if rooted to the soil, until he feels that all the forces of Mother Earth enter into him; only then he sings the song in which there resound all the mysterious elements of earthly forces that rise to heaven.

> La terre parle en moi comme dans une conque.
> Et je deviens, cessant d'être un oiseau quelconque,
> Le port-voix en quelque sort officiel
> Par quoi le cri du sol s'échappe vers le ciel!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Et ce cri qui monte de la terre,
> Ce cri, c'est un tel cri d'amour pour la lumière,
> C'est un si furieux et grondant cri d'amour
> Pour cette chose d'or qui s'appelle le jour.

This revelation makes the Hen-pheasant perplexed for her female egotism, her ardent desire of domineering allow not that her lover should think of anything but herself. That morning Chantecler excels himself in singing and the day is of extraordinary brilliancy. Under such circumstances he should feel happy, but he is not, for, as all true artists, he has some doubts; he believes that he makes the sun rise but he does not know why he should have such power—his singing remains a tantalising mystery to him. He is uneasy, he is perplexed. . . . If only he could be sure that a feminine loving soul would believe in him and would comfort him, would bring him alleviation of anxiety. . . . Therefore he beseeches his companion to tell him that she is and will be to him for ever that most loved and most loyal friend. The Hen-pheasant, however, is not that superior female friend who could understand the higher aspiration of her male . . .; she is a vain coquette; she sees that never before was she as charming as she is that morning, therefore she hastens to the

Guinea-fowl's "At Home," where she could be admired in her frock made so lovely by her lover. Chantecler will not go with her. At that moment the Blackbird, who was hiding behind a bush and overheard the conversation, appears and jeers at Chantecler's infatuation for the Hen-pheasant as well as at his self-conceit in regard to the mysterious power of his singing. Chantecler is indignant, for he is honest and sincere in his belief. The bird-sneerer takes no notice of his suffering and in further chat tells him about the plot against his life. Chantecler is brave; he will go and face his enemies.

The third act takes place in the kitchen garden of the farm; it serves the Guinea-fowl as a drawing-room. As every *salon* must have its great man as an attraction, the Peacock is chosen for the central figure of the gathering of the birds; he is a boastful braggadocio, talking about rare sentiments and professing sophistical theories. The "At Home" is very well attended by a large crowd of all species of cocks and other birds. Chantecler arrives and, after having put down his enemies by his brilliant grandiloquence, he fights the bully-cock and remains master of the situation, both physically and morally. This victory is that of lucidity over pretentious subtlety, of serious effort over common buffoonery, of sound intelligence over inanity of mind, of sincerity over hypocrisy. The kitchen garden seems to be changed into the Hôtel Rambouillet, where Molière's voice resounded while he was attaching *les précieux* and the pedants, with this difference, that in *Chantecler* the poet gives us a virulent satire directed against all kinds of æsthetic and worldly snobbery.

A magnificent forest, full of majesty and impressive poetry, is represented in the fourth act. In this forest Chantecler lives with the Hen-pheasant; he has recovered his glorious voice lost in the third act, after having listened to many inconsistent theories given by different cocks as to the best way of singing substituted for the natural gift; he sings now every morning and believes in his mission. The Hen-pheasant, however, as a true female, indifferent to everything that does not concern her exclusive love, wishes to make a slave of her lover; she claims that he should give her a proof of his sentiment towards her by sacrificing for her sake his pride, his ambition and even that which he considers to be his duty. He resists, saying:

Vous n'en restez pas moins une femelle encore
Pour qui toujours l'idée est la grande adversaire.

. . . . . .

Je te serre,
Oui, sur mon cœur de Coq! Mais c'eut été meilleur
De te serrer contre mon âme d'éveilleur.

Vain effort to awaken her to raise her to his higher standard; she will remain his *douce amie-ennemie* * by proving to him that he is wrong, and in order to win her point she distracts him by making him listen to the sweet singing of the nightingale, that while listening to it he shall forget about everything as the one who listens with the whole soul, with the whole heart, to the voice of night, of heaven, of futurity momentous with hopes and longings. Taking advantage of Chantecler's absent-mindedness produced by rapture, she covers his head with her wings and in that moment the sun rises before he can sing; he frees himself from her treacherous embrace and sings as loudly as he is able, but it is too late—the light of the sun having already filled the forest. Chantecler is distressed, but he is saved from despair by a thought that his singing on the previous morning was so glorious that there remained a part of it in the air and that made the sun rise; he still believes in himself. However, he sees his mistake; he understands that he has nothing to do in the forest and he determines to return to his farmyard, to sing there every morning as formerly, to perform his duties simply, for which, perchance, he will not be less great. As to the Hen-pheasant, she follows him for she is caught in a snare by the farmer, who takes her to his farmyard; she is compelled to give up her freedom and independence and henceforth she will live loved by the cock and submissive to him.

* * * * *

Such is this noble and sublime fancy produced not only by Rostand's genius, but by his great efforts and his resourceful ingenuity as well. It is less diverting than *Cyrano* but it is more important on account of its poetical value, in regard to the reform it introduces to the theatre, as well as because of serious thoughts and weighty lessons furnished to us and rendered in the most masterly and varied verse. Rostand's taste is for talking much; he is able to give fairy-like phrases, a kind of *bal costumé* † where the words pass like disguised people—some of them elegant and quiet, others shouting and vulgar. There seems to be in him an eternal spring of words. There is a danger in that abundance, for it leads to monotony; Rostand, however, avoids that peril; sometimes he is near to it, another time he touches it, then immediately he controls himself and uses verses of a different kind, inserting them with masterly skill. Hence that variety in his work of triolets, of odes, of sonnets, of great frolics, and fine lines. He is a past-master in bringing again and again the same

* Raoul Comte de Soissons. Vide *Les œuvres d'Etienne Pasquier*, 1723, vol. ii.
† M. Geffroy.

word in every verse, accompanying it by ever-varying qualifications, as is the case with the word *coq*. In some places his alliterations and his puns are worthy of the Marquis de Bièvre and of Commerson; his fancy, his capriciousness, and inspiration are boundless, his workmanship is perfect, everything being chased and finished *ad unguem*. His ability in constructing verses is astounding; in that regard he is a true legerdemainist. He is endowed with Theodore de Banville's facility and gracefulness, and with Victor Hugo's grandeur and verve. His art of alternating ironical or comical with melancholic and tender parts is inimitable. His rhymes in their variety are difficult to be surpassed, while the use of words could not be more just.

Rostand has proved once more to be an exquisite poet whose refined mind, delicate, frank, and sincere soul are appreciated by artists and the crowd as well. Never before has the poet written such excellent verses as he has done in *Chantecler*, where the Ode to the Sun, the whole half of the second act, the apostrophe to the Blackbird, the prayer of the small birds, the incantation to the night, and the song of the nightingale are the work of a genius.

Through the medium of animals the poet utters biting verities and is prodigious in brusque antitheses, in quips and cranks. He brands those who sneer constantly and are heartless, but admires those in whom a strong mind is united with sensitiveness. He detests those who claim to be unmoved by anything because they think that to be emotional means to be incorrect. Then he enjoins us to preserve faith and enthusiasm notwithstanding the toads that slaver over everything that is good and exalted, notwithstanding females that are foes of everything that does not concern passion. He speaks to us about the love of country, about fondness of lucidity, about noble generosity, and charming simplicity. He teaches us that the artist must be fixed to the native soil, as is the cock while he sings, to be in continual contact with Nature in order to be able to produce a masterpiece.

He is right in that regard for having himself followed this advice, he has given to the world an eloquent, enchanting, surprising, moving and exclusively unique work, which undoubtedly will remain.

Chantecler was played by such a concourse of accomplished actors and staged in such a manner that one can safely say, without exaggeration, that never before was a piece played better, and presented more artistically than was this powerful and extraordinary poem.

REVIEWS

D'Annunzio's New Novel

By V. M. Crawford

Forse che si, forse che no. Romanzo di Gabriele d'Annunzio. Treves, Milan, pp. 523, price 5 lire.

When, into our sober Saxon life, there perchance penetrates some gust of southern passion and *joie de vivre* it comes with startling effect. We shrink from its crude reality as we shrink before the white blaze of sunshine on an Italian piazza at noonday. It is hard to believe that contemporary life can be lived at such sensuous heights, with such entire detachment from our useful everyday standards of morality. The women even more than the men, whom Gabriele d'Annunzio reveals to us, are unlike any human beings as we know them in Northern Europe. But it would be rash to say that they are not true to a type at least of woman of the Latin nations, and they recall vividly those entrancing women of the Renaissance immortalised by the portrait painters of their day. Described with d'Annunzio's unrivalled gift for word-painting they sweep across the pages of his novels with the swift poetry of motion, their slender limbs dexterously revealed beneath their clinging draperies as though they had stepped from one of Botticelli's loveliest compositions. And while we frankly admire the one, shall we avert our eyes with disapproval from the other? If, on the one hand, the lives of his men and women are absorbed by much that is ignoble and corrupting in human passion, their daily existence is beautified by an exquisite sensibility to intellectual pleasures. In the novel before us Isabella and Vana, equally with them brother Aldo, are steeped in the literature and the art of their country; their common chat is full of classical allusions; they interpret their emotions by the love-songs of Jacopone da Todi, "il Pazzo di Cristo": they improvise tender little rhymes as a pastime, and inebriate themselves and each other with music: Aldo plays the violoncello and Vana sings bewitchingly, and

before her suicide, takes leave of her girl-friends by so piercing a rendering of Schumann's *Lieder* that they all crowd round her sobbing, divining some approaching disaster. At writing of this description no one is a greater adept than d'Annunzio: at times the poignant significance of his psychology is wellnigh hidden beneath his lavish squandering of decorative blossoms.

That after several years devoted to the drama and to verse he should once more have given to the world a long complete novel is good news for his foreign readers, for many of whom the beauties of the *Laudi* and the *Odi Navali* are somewhat obscure, and who, perhaps, share in the widely felt difficulty of appreciating plays they have not seen acted. Outside Italy, d'Annunzio is probably still best known as the author of *L'Innocente*, of the *Trionfo della Morte*, of *Il Fuoco*. In *Forse che si, forse che no* his admirers will find much that they are familiar with in conception and in treatment, but, in addition, a wider, more virile outlook on life, and in some respects at least a truer appreciation of relative values. There is too, as the result no doubt of writing for the stage, a far more definite characterisation. It will be remembered that in each of the earlier romances the heroine possesses scarcely any individual entity and is shown merely in her dependence on the hero, and the hero, whether he call himself Tullio Hermil or Giorgio Aurispa, is, in the main, d'Annunzio himself, and the interpreter of d'Annunzian conceptions. These romances deal with an intensity of amorism so persistent and so all-pervading that in the end the palate is cloyed and admiration is turned almost to nausea. Against his recent more mature work, a similar accusation cannot fairly be brought. Through *Forse che si, forse che no*, as through its immediate predecessor *La Nave*, the great drama of the founding of Venice, written two years ago, there sweeps a new and untamed vigour, a worship of life in the open air and of sheer physical strength. True, in *La Nave* there is as central figure the lascivious Basiliola, the type of the great courtesan, but the main conception of the tragedy is the noble one of the uprising of a maritime power through the building of a mighty symbolical ship, and the struggle for supremacy between the Christian and the heathen worship. So, in the later novel, behind the love-motive and even dominating it, we have the conquest of the air by the aviator and the intoxicating sense of physical power and measureless freedom that it confers. Tarsis, the hero, is the embodiment of muscular strength and endurance: sailor, traveller, and aviator.

"La biliosa faccia scarnita dall' ardore di vincere, la pupilla fulminea del predatore, quegli angoli vivi che parevano fatti

per fendere come i conii la resistenza, quelle dure mascelle che per contrasto portavano la carne rossa della bocca come un frutto molle in una tenaglia d'acciaio" (p. 61).

Beside him we are shown his boon companion Giulio Cambiaso, who resembled a noble portrait by Van Dyck amid the gloom of a Genoese palace, and with whom he shared his life of peril and adventure, until, in an evil moment, Isabella Inghirami crossed his path with her brother Aldo and her younger sisters Vana and Lunella. In the delineation of these wonderful young people, wholly pagan, wholly devoid of any Christian sense, exquisitely sensitive to colour, to music, to rhythm, but paying the penalty of satiety in a measureless melancholy, the author displays all his keenness of psychological perception joined to his unique power of conveying a sense of doom and fatality. Each of them emerges from the written page with extraordinary intensity. Lunella plays the part of child chorus; she pierces with pure eyes into the tragic forces that surround her, and heightens the effect with her childish terrors and aversions. Aldo, beautiful as a woman, acutely capable of suffering and absolutely incapable of action, is the type of masculine decadence. He represents the central plague-spot in the doomed family, and his evil influence having done its work he passes from the scene. Isabella and Vana, both lovely, witty, and accomplished, the one a young widow with a dubious past, the other still standing on the virgin threshold of womanhood, appear in perpetual opposition. Both are fiercely independent, both fight for happiness with all their strength, and both, from the first page of the romance to its tragic close, rush upon their doom.

The story opens on a note of passion and intensity of life that d'Annunzio alone can reproduce, and that he has maintained with amazing power throughout the 500 pages of his novel. Isabella and Paolo Tarsis are tearing across the Mantuan plains in a motor, and with his hands on the wheel he makes wild love to the slim wind-swept form beside him. Isabella is intoxicated by the swift rush of the air, the nearness of danger—they collide with a team of oxen and fly on unheeding—and by the sense of her lover's physical strength and of her own sensual power over him. She has not yet given herself to him, but both realise that the supreme moment is near. They wander hand in hand through the vast palace set amid the Mantuan marshes, still permeated with memories of Isabella d'Este—no one is more fitted than d'Annunzio to evoke the fascinating memories of such a spot—and as the lovers stand clasped in each other's arms they become conscious of a figure gazing with scared eyes from the

doorway. It is Vana, who has followed with Aldo in another motor.

The rest of the book is filled with the duel between the two sisters for the love of Paolo Tarsis. We are shown in intimate detail the growth of hatred and suspicion between them beneath the apparent harmony of family life. The finest scene in the book is perhaps that in which they at length face each other, tear asunder the veil of reticence and silence that has hung between them, and in biting words, keen as a razor, fight for ownership of the man whom both love. Isabella asks in scorn how much Vana cares for Tarsis.

"Come tu non saprai amarlo mai."

"Credi che tu l'ami di più?"

"Non di più. L'amo io sola."

"Io no?"

"Tu non puoi amare se non te stessa, se non il tuo piacere, se non la tua perfidia. È il tuo castigo."

"L'amore più forte non è quello che vince?"

"È il mio quello che vince."

"Su chi?"

"Su te e su lui."

For the moment it is the girl, strong in her chastity, who triumphs. She and Paolo have stood together in the silence of night, by the bier of his dead friend, and thus there is between them a sacred spiritual bond more potent and lasting than that of the flesh.

This enthralling and painful love-motive is intermingled with the keen open-air joys of aviation. An aeroplane in flight inspires d'Annunzio to his most rhythmic apostrophes, his most rapturous word-painting—was not all Europe informed when the great man made his first ascent? When the "Dædalian birds" swoop and rise in succession as at an aviation meeting his ecstasy grows lyric. His description of the great international gathering on the plains of Lombardy recalls in some of its characteristics his notorious picture of the pilgrimage to Casalbordino in the *Trionfo della Morte*. A human crowd appears always to reveal to him its most brutal and depraved elements; he has no pity, no feeling of sympathy for humanity in the mass. Later in the book, when Isabella discovers that love of adventure is stronger in her hero even than his passion for herself, and that he is rebelling with all his strength against the debasing servitude in which she holds him, she too consents to mount with him his beloved "Ardea," and day after day they fly over the exquisite Italian landscape, skim the shores of the

Mediterranean, and look down on the sunset over "Madonna Pisa" and the Campo Santo. At Pisa the paths of dalliance are strewn with flowers; Isabella dances by moonlight before Tarsis on the terrace of the villa, and the atmosphere of passion in which the lovers spend their days, remote from the world, is heightened by all the familiar devices, by music, by the heavy scent of flowers—lilies and magnolia and tuberose—and by the electricity of approaching thunder-clouds. Later, when the tragedy is closing in, when fate is about to exact a heavy toll from its victims, the scene changes appropriately to volcanic sun-burnt Volterra, the home of Isabella's widowhood. Here, both within and without the Inghirami palace, all is harsh discord. To be day after day under the same roof with her sister and Tarsis, is more than Vana's proud spirit can endure. When to her sister's insults and Paola's coldness is added a sudden understanding of Aldo's turpitude—the underlying motive throughout the book is the same as in the *Città Morta*—Vana succumbs to the horrors that surround her and deliberately—and very elegantly—takes her life with an antique dagger, set with chalcedony, and with a bunch of yellow roses lying at her feet. She triumphs in death at least over Isabella, who falls into utter moral degradation followed by lunacy. Tarsis, released from his galling chains, flings himself back into the joys of aviation and on a nuptial morning in April is borne by his "Ardea" in swift solitary flight from the mainland to Sardinia, where he alights on a stretch of sand. "It was Land! . . . It was Life! . . . It was Victory!"

"Non clamore, non tuono di trionfo; non moltitudine pallida di facce, irta di mani. Silenzio selvaggio, erma gloria; e il mattino ancor fresco; e il respiro del mare fanciullo che le braccia piegate della terra cullavano; e la parola della segreta nutrice che sa la vita e la morte e cio che deve nascere e ciò che non può morire e il tempo di tutto. 'Figlio, non v' è dio se non sei tu quello.'"

For the women death and disgrace; for the man not even a dishonouring memory of what had once been!

When all is said, the supreme distinction of Gabriele d'Annunzio remains his sense of style. Not his psychology, not his undaunted pagan propensities, not his literary culture, wide and discriminating as it is, but his unerring skill in manipulating the Italian language. His prose is a delight to the ear, rich, varied, flowing in rhythmic cadences, flexible to his every need. His verse carries forward to unexpected heights the work of evolution inaugurated by Carducci. Together they have made

modern Italian poetry. Nothing is more remarkable than the very high level of harmonious progression that d'Annunzio succeeds in maintaining throughout a long novel. Here and there the art may be a little laboured, the effort to excel a little obvious. Maybe in obtaining his more sensuous effects he is a little lavish in his use, borrowed from music, of reiteration of phrase and sound. It is a device that in prose writing needs a delicate discrimination, else it comes perilously near to mere trickery. The flight of swallows, for instance, is always to him like a flight of arrows, and the word *saettamento* recurs invariably in the connection, in the end with irritating effect. These, however, are but trivial blemishes. A narrative device which he uses with singular skill is that of evocation. Just as certain novelists—Mr. George Moore, for example—make a subtle use of memory to vary their narrative and relate events not in their happening, but as they have remained imprinted on the brain of one of the actors, so d'Annunzio improvises scenes not as they occur but as they suggest themselves to the imagination of the speaker. There is the charming playful scene in the suggestive setting of Isabella d'Este's private rooms at Mantua, when Isabella d'Inghirami pretends to be her celebrated namesake and Aldo skilfully evokes before her the daily life of the Renaissance Duchess. So Giulio Cambiaso, before his fatal ascent, persuades Vana that she is the very image of a Hindu girl he had met in India, and she, her imagination touched, consents to play the part, and so slips into a pathetic and innocent little romance. Every woman, says d'Annunzio, loves to throw herself into an imaginary state of life. In the same way he sometimes evokes scenes of horror and pain, as when Aldo paints for his sisters, in a few tense words, a vision of Cambiaso's mother, whom they none of them knew, waking in the morning to learn of her son's death, crushed and broken beneath the weight of his aeroplane. Every page, indeed, has its beauties, which readers must seek for themselves. Frankly, however, we hope no one will be inspired to translate the book into English. *Forse che si, forse che no* must be read in the glowing original or read not at all.

A New Life of Fielding

By Norreys Connell

Henry Fielding: a Memoir. Including newly discovered Letters and Records. With Illustrations from Contemporary Prints. By G. M. Godden. (Sampson Low and Co., 1910.)

Mr. Alexander Pope, writing to some fair forgotten one, said that "to give the world its due, it always is very fond of Merit when 'tis past its power to oppose it." It is far beyond the world's power to oppose Fielding's merit, but it is not certain that the world is very fond of him, even the world of England. Every one who can spell a way through a literary primer is aware that Scott acknowledged Fielding to be the father of the English novel, and the least clerkly of city clerks can name *Tom Jones* and wink, yet it is rare to find one who has read anything of Fielding from title to colophon, and rarer still to hear complaint of the absence of any image of the most national of English writers from the National Portrait Gallery. There is, to be sure, no perfectly authentic portrait of Fielding to be found, but the like difficulty has little troubled Spain in the case of the author of *Don Quixote*. Hogarth's sketch of his friend and contemporary, though posthumous, is not so remotely connected with its subject as the official likeness of Cervantes, painted by an Englishman born two generations and more after Cervantes deceased.

Fielding incautiously declared that no prude could enter Elysium, and that large and influential class of society has sought to avenge itself by banishing him from earth. There are people who find the *Merry Wives of Windsor* a pure and innocent entertainment, and are ravished by *As You Like It*, who would not open *Joseph Andrews*. And these are not merely God's Englishmen unable to distinguish between Polonius and the Apostle Paul: a writer of as much knowledge and taste as the late Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson has found it in his heart to cast stones, not to say half-bricks, at Fielding's sense of decency. He called *Tom*

Jones "a novel of which the respectable profess that they could stand the dulness if it were not so blackguardly, and the more honest admit they could forgive the blackguardism if it were not so dull."

One can only excuse Stevenson on the plea that when he wrote these words he was trying to turn an honest penny by looking at life through American spectacles. No one will accuse Mr. Augustine Birrell of glorying in mischief, yet he it was who cried not very long ago: "No wonder *Tom Jones* is still running, where, I should like to know, is the man bold enough to stop him?"

No man whose mind has not been enfeebled by an ailing body or weaklier company would want to lay a trap for *Tom Jones*, and it is fair to Stevenson to continue his criticism: "In *Amelia*, things get better; all things get better; it is one of the curiosities of literature that Fielding, who wrote one book that was engaging, truthful, kind, and clean, and another book that was dirty, dull, and false, should be spoken of, the world over, as the author of the second and not the first, as the author of *Tom Jones*, not of *Amelia*." Now it was Stevenson's own irreproachable Sir Walter who would have it that "Fielding's fame rests on a single *chef-d'œuvre;* and the art and industry which produced *Tom Jones* was unable to rise to equal excellence in *Amelia*": an opinion one finds supported in our own time by Mr. Seccombe: "From *Tom Jones* Fielding declines. *Amelia* is like an impression from the same master hand, but uncoloured." The present writer is with Stevenson and Fielding himself in thinking *Amelia* the wiser and, therefore, the better book. And to him the curiosity of literature lies in the fact that while Stevenson reckoned Booth a gentleman and Jones a cad, Sir Walter laid down the contrary: "We have not the same sympathy for the ungrateful and dissolute conduct of Booth which we yield to the youthful follies of Jones." It seems possible that Sir Walter's opinion is the better; for in our time few Sophias would reject Tom Jones and fewer Amelias bear with Captain Booth—no woman will allow her husband to be unfaithful unless he grants her the counter-irritation of martyrdom as well.

Already in Scott's day, however, Fielding was out of fashion at the libraries; for that hour was come when, as anticipated by Smollett, novel-writing was "engrossed by female authors, who publish merely for the propagation of virtue, with so much ease, and spirit, and delicacy, and knowledge of the human heart, and all in the serene tranquillity of high life, that the reader is not only enchanted by their genius, but reformed by their morality."

Yet time has slowly taken his revenge and women, having bled literature dry in the nineteenth century, so that no man dared choose a theme but from the nursery books, are now set to write with their own pens a new robust literature for themselves. So it comes that the best informed and most whole-hearted appreciation of Fielding ever written is published with the signature of a spinster lady, Miss Gertrude M. Godden.

This is how Miss Godden encourages us poor fellows, who dared to maintain that Fielding, or any man, may call a spade a spade without digging a pitfall for virtue with it, to lift our heads again: "That Henry Fielding should have been born among buildings raised by Benedictine hands is not incongruous; for no man ever more heartily preached and practised the virtue of open-handed charity; none was more ready to scourge the vices of arrogance, cruelty and avarice; no English novelist has left us brighter pictures of innocence and goodness. And it was surely a happy stroke of that capricious Fortune to whom Fielding so often refers, to allot a Harlequin Chamber for the birth of the author of nineteen comedies; and yet more appropriate to the robust genius of the Comic Epic was the accident that placed on the wall, beneath the window of his birth-room, a jovial jest in stone. For here some sixteenth-century humorist had displayed the arms of Abbot Beere in the form of a convivial rebus or riddle—to wit, a cross and two beer-flagons." Facing these words is a picture of Sharpham House, Somerset, from a print, published in 1826, showing the room in which Fielding was born. "I am indebted to Mr. Sidney Colvin," says Miss Godden, "in regard to almost every one of the thirty-two rare prints and cartoons now reproduced."

The illustrations are of an exceptionally interesting nature. Besides the well-known print after Hogarth's pen-and-ink sketch, to which reference has been made, we have a coloured reproduction of the miniature in the possession of Mr. Ernest Fielding, manifestly founded on Hogarth, and the frontispiece to Sir John Fielding's *Jests*, showing Henry reading at the Bedford Arms, where the portrait seems drawn from the same authority; and again, Sir Edward Tennant's *Hogarth*, picturing the green-room of Drury Lane with a group probably including the author of *Love in Several Masques*, *The Mock Doctor*, *The Miser*, *The Intriguing Chambermaid*, *The Virgin Unmasked*, *The Universal Gallant*, *The Wedding Day* and other plays produced at that theatre. Even more valuable is the engraving "Henry Fielding, defending Betty Canning from her accusers, the Lord Mayor, Dr. Hill, and the Gipsy; from a contemporary print, now first reproduced, and

the only known sketch of Fielding made during his lifetime"; and there are other reproductions in which the great author figures but without serious attempt at portraiture. There are portraits also of his brother, Sir John Fielding, his grandfather, Sir Henry Gould, his patrons Lyttelton and Ralph Allen, his *protégé*, Edward Moore, his friend, Justice Saunders Welch, and his old, but at last forgiven enemy, Sir Robert Walpole. Unfortunately, of the women who did so much to make life pleasant for this "unmitigated *noceur*" as Mr. Seccombe has called him for the boys and girls in *Cornhill*, we have only a couple of actresses and his elderly cousin Lady Mary (depicted in the youth she enjoyed when Harry was three). Of his mother, Sarah Gould, daughter of Mr. Justice Gould of the King's Bench Division, of his sister Fielding, the learned and talented authoress of *David Simple*, and above all of Charlotte Cradock, his pretty wife, and poor Mary Daniel, his plain but no less worthy one, the portraits are wanting, and having baffled Miss Godden's search are likely to remain so.

But one must not wrong Miss Godden by implying that she is a mere grangeriser of the accepted biographies. With modesty she tells us: "New material alone could justify any attempt to supplement the *Fielding* of Mr. Austin Dobson. Such material has now come to light, and together with reliable facts collected by previous biographers, forms the subject of the present volume. . . .

"The new material includes records of Fielding's childhood; documents concerning his estate in Dorsetshire, the date and place, hitherto undiscovered, of that central event in his life, the death of his beloved wife, whose memorial was to be the imperishable figure of 'Sophia Western'; letters, now first published, adding to our knowledge of his energies in social and legislative reform, and of the circumstances of his life; many extracts from the columns of the daily Press of the period; notices, hitherto overlooked, from his contemporaries; and details from the unexplored archives of the Middlesex Records concerning his strenuous work as a London magistrate. The few letters of Fielding already known to exist have been doubled in number; and a reason for the extraordinary rarity of these letters has been found in the unfortunate destruction, many years ago, of much of the correspondence."

One would be glad to know something of the circumstances of the "unfortunate destruction" of the other Fielding letters if Miss Godden can give them, but meanwhile we may well be grateful for what we have received. It is something, for instance,

to know that Fielding married Charlotte Cradock in November 1734, when she had no money, and that when she died at Bath just ten years later he carried her body to London to bury it at St. Martin-in-the-Fields (where rest Farquhar and Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, Jack Sheppard and Nell Gwynne, as well as the great John Hunter, who doctored both Fielding and Smollett) where it received "honourable interment in the chancel vault, to the tolling of the great tenor bell, and with the fullest ceremonial of the time," which leads one to believe that this extraordinarily happy union did not struggle with quite such a Bohemian existence as Mr. Fielding's well-to-do connections were pleased to represent.

Although the last few years of Fielding's short life were passed in a slavery to the public good and the convenience of the Duke of Newcastle, which possibly blurred his sensitivity to material ugliness, there is no evidence that up to the time of Charlotte's death their surroundings were of a markedly sordid nature. Privation is hinted at, but it is the privation of St. James's and not of Grub Street: I have myself known a young man live gently in Jermyn Street on less than one substantial meal a day, and although Mrs. Amelia Booth is praised for her thrift in the matter of white wine and tarts, there is no mention that she and her little family ever went hungry to bed. Unless during certain dark days of her husband's illness in 1742–43, Miss Godden's book establishes, as it seems to me, that Mrs. Fielding had no worse experience of hardship than Mrs. Booth, while she certainly had a more entertaining partner in what sorrow was her portion. If Lady Mary had any right to be "persuaded he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth," we may feel confident that through ten years' weal and woe Charlotte Fielding was happier than most princesses. It is also to be noted that although Fielding was more easily cozened than Smollett he made better provision for his second wife, who survived him by nearly half a century, bringing up his sons to make a respectable figure in liberal professions.

There is another point made clear by Miss Godden which seems so far to have mocked the judgment of every one except Mr. Bernard Shaw. In the Johnson circle there prevailed a tradition that Fielding was unsuccessful as a playwright, and a generation later we have Sir Walter Scott (the worst writer of plays that could write a paragraph) implying that Fielding was no better dramatist than Smollett. He finds that of the latter's two plays *The Regicide* "evinces in particular passages the genius of the author"; and *The Reprisals, or, The Tars of Old*

England, is described by him at some length though he admits "it forms no marked exception to the observation that successful novelists have been rarely distinguished by excellence in dramatic composition," while the "something like dulness" which Sir Walter thought to pervade Fielding's whole dramaturgy seems to show that he paid it little attention. Fielding's plays are many of them carelessly constructed but they are not so dull that the present writer has not been able to read the worst of them three times, wondering every time what Garrick wanted retrenched in *The Wedding Day*.

But the truth about Fielding's playwriting has been best and most succinctly put by Mr. Shaw:

"In 1737, Henry Fielding, the greatest practising dramatist, with the single exception of Shakespeare, produced by England between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century, devoted his genius to the task of exposing and destroying parliamentary corruption; then at its height. Walpole, unable to govern without corruption, promptly gagged the stage by a censorship which is in full force at the present time. Fielding, driven out of the trade of Molière and Aristophanes, took to that of Cervantes; and since then the English novel has been one of the glories of literature, while the English drama has been its disgrace."

Miss Godden's evidence proves Mr. Shaw to have gone no step beyond his brief. She shows Harry Fielding at the age of eight and twenty managing the Haymarket Theatre with complete success as author, producer, and even stage-manager, drawing with his own plays crowded audiences "from Grosvenor, Cavendish, Hanover and all the other fashionable Squares, as also from Pall Mall and the Inns of Court," and doing his best to make a success of the work of the "gentle Nonconformist poet," Lillo, the author of *George Barnwell* and *Fatal Curiosity*.

To quote Miss Godden: "As a manager of the intrepid little theatre in the Haymarket, as well as the author of the most successful of the offending plays, the Licensing Act fell with double weight on Fielding. 'When I speak against the Bill,' cried Chesterfield, 'I must think I plead the cause of Wit, I plead the cause of Humour, I plead the cause of the British Stage, and of every gentleman of taste in the Kingdom.' Looking back over two centuries, we honour Chesterfield in that, unknown to himself, he also pleaded the cause of the greatest of English humorists. But appeals on behalf of genius and freedom were thrown away upon Walpole; the Act received the royal assent on June 21, 1737; and, in the honourable company

of Wit, Humour, and Taste, Fielding was forced to retire from the theatre, on the boards of which he had for two years so vigorously assailed Ministerial corruption and autocracy."

Arising from this we may observe that the only point wherein Miss Godden appears to lose touch with her subject is when she takes his reference (in *The Voyage to Lisbon*) to Walpole as "one of the best of men and of ministers" to be ironical. This is not the view of Mr. Austin Dobson, and indeed no student of Fielding's political writings of 1745 and 1746 can doubt that the much-injured manager of the Haymarket came to recognise in his dead enemy, "Bluestring," the greatest "practising" statesman of his day, greater perhaps even than the "Terrible Cornet of Horse" to whom Harry Fielding read *Tom Jones*. But, for all that, Walpole suppressing the coarseness of the stage is one of the most fantastic pictures in English history, comparable only with Sandwich's attack on Wilkes and throwing into the shade the devil rebuking sin. Fielding's life was purity itself compared with Robert Walpole's, and in his plays there is no language to surpass in obscenity that which fell from the First Minister of the Crown in conversation with his Queen.

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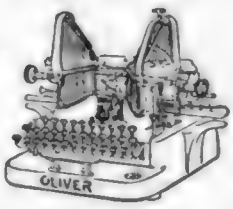

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